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Chapter 1

“Uphi uMakaNkosinathi?(Where is Nkosinathi's mother?)”

She is standing by the door looking at me as I polish the hut floor. She is waiting for me to answer her about Mamkhulu's whereabouts. I stand up from the floor and stop my duty.

“She is with Mphembe” I say and she huffs.

“Where?” MaGasa asks

She is the second to last wife, just like Mamkhulu she is talkative and always complains, she is not nice at all but I tolerate her.

“Her room” She huffs and walks out.

I went back to polishing the hut floor. It has to be nice and clean. A ceremony that will be done for Nkosinathi, who is Nkosinathi? I am bound to find out who he is. I am the last wife

, Mamncane of Babu'Ntuli. My husband is twice my age and he always chooses his wives from the reed dance. My husband is the wealthiest man in this village after the king though. A very big man with a big stomach and 7 wives. I am the youngest wife and I have just arrived, two months ago. My parents were happy that I was getting married with a wealthy man.

Babu'Ntuli owns farms and cattle more than anything and is a very traditional Zulu man. We are all not educated. Education for what ? We are trained to be wives and serve our husband, never question but serve him yet I have many questions. I did complete my matric though and that was it.

Does he ever equally do the same for you? Will he keep me happy? He is my father's age . My husband that is , the wedding ceremony wasn't something big. It was small and intimate, my friend Dudu kept on reminding me that this is my break through. I will just have to give him kids and also please him. I am yet to meet some of his children. The older one's. Some of them are married and some are in university studying to be whatever they want to be , so I have heard.

My husband has 29 children. The little ones I forget all the time. I just found a way to call them, 'Ngane yami' and they respond quickly saying 'Mamncane'. This life of polygamy is something I am yet to see.

“Mamncane”, I look up and it's Sensile, I remember his name alot because he helps me around here.

He is 13 years and his voice box is breaking , pimples are appearing. There are 4 of them that are 13. Sensile , Lenziwe , Wenzile and Phumzile. All from different wives just a month difference between them. Mphembe was busy that year with them. All of his kids are a year or two apart that is why there are 29 children.

All of my sister wives are called by their maiden surnames as 'MaGasa' or we call them by their first child's name like ' Maka Nkosinathi'. I don't have a child as yet so I am refered to as Mamncane or MaSibisi.

I get up from the floor and give him my fullest attention. He has a whip in his hand and seems like he went out herding the cows with Somthini. He is the herder of this family and no he is not a Ntuli.

“Senzile ” , I say

“Ubaba uyakucela (Dad is asking for you)” , I wonder what he is in need off.

“Ok, I am coming”,he walks out.

I finish up and went out with the polish. I went to the tap and wash my hands and wipe them before going inside the main house. There is noise in the kitchen. They are all busy. A guest is

here and is chatting with Mamkhulu the most and they seem to be getting along very well.

“Sawubona (Hello)”,I greet as she looks at me up and down. Examining me.

“How old are you?”, the woman asks. Mamkhulu is giving me a stare. If looks could kill I would be dead now.

“21”

She claps her hands and I walk out of the kitchen. I could hear them talking. I am the youngest I did say and MaGasa is only 49 years old. A big difference between her age and mine but I am not here for that. I go to Mphembe’s room and I knock lightly.

“Come in !”, I walk inside and close the door.

“You asked for me Mphembe ”, my eyes are rooted on the floor.

“Yebo MaSibisi, Ingane ezinye zithi zisendleleni. Ngabe konke kulungile ?(Yes MaSibisi, the other children called and said they are on their way. Is everything prepared?)”,I nod

“Yes Mphembe. Everything is well, the food will be ready shortly” , I say

“Ok, you can go”

“Mphembe” , I bow and I walk out of his room. I walk to my room so I would take a bath.

I am done and dusted, looking at myself through the mirror. I could hear loud music from the cities and cars hooting. I check if my doek is in place and I then walk out of my flat. Two beautiful small Taxi's park upfront and the doors open.

“Daddy!” , One of the girl's scream and she hugs her father.

“Unjani Ngane Kababa (How are you ?)” , Mphembe asks.

“Good daddy, Oh mom. I missed you guys” She hugs MaMsomi, the 3rd wife and then goes to the others. I assume that is her daughter.

Everyone is hugging each other and even the little ones. These ones look more or less my age and there are 12 of them. I hear MaKhumalo asking how is varsity and I then collect that they are the ones who are schooling.

“School is ok” , one of the boys answers, they look fresh and stylish. The long hair and fancy hair cut. The long nails as well as Heels. How can they walk on those in such a place?

“This is My new wife, It's MaSibisi” , Mphembe says and they all look at me and I face down.

“You are kidding right?” , one of the girls talk

“Zanele !” MaKhumalo reprimids.

She keeps quiet but seemingly isn't pleased.

“She is your new mother. Respect her ”, Mphembe adds and they nod.

Everyone is moving from the cars and I heard one of the guys say to Somthini that it's a Mercedes Benz. It looks quiet expensive. We are in the main house now and everyone is talking. MaKhumalo has more kids than the rest. Expected since she is the first wife. These kids are more than enough and this is a very big family on its own.

“Is there any network here or wifi?”

“Your father put wefe a month ago”, What is special about this Wefe?

“Its Wifi mom ”, one girl says

“I don't know these technology things ” MaMsomi says

I am lost but sitting here and listening to them telling interesting stories about University. Sounds very fantastic and scary as well. I would like to go there to one day and see how it's like as well. I would like to study and see these things as well. I wonder if Mphembe will agree to that.

They carry on talking and Mphembe loves his children just the way he is especially with his daughters. There are more of them than boys but atleast he has boy children. Tomorrow we will

meet the other ones as well and see how they are. I have heard MaKhumalo brag about Nkosinathi and how he is flourishing in the city. He is married from what I know and has two kids. A lawyer and now is opening his law firm. That is why the ceremony is conducted. It's for him to thank the ancestors and also ask for guidance and more blessings in his life.

At 4 am , I am awake and starting the fire so I can bath and start with my duties. There is a bathroom in my room but I don't know how this rain water works so I am better off using the bathing dish. The water gets hot and I go to bath in my room. I am done and I wear iphinifa on me. MaGasa is up as well and we move to the kitchen to make some porridge for the whole family.

“Look how our children are almost your age” , she says while stirring the pot. I keep my silence.

“Mamncane , MaGasa”, MaThabethe walks in and she greets us. She is very sweet and has only 3 children from the 29. She is the second wife and she only has boys. She is more or less my mother's age, always smiling and always quiet as well. She doesn't speak much but when she speaks she is heard. She has 3 boys and they are working from my understanding. She is a great soul this one.

“Do you need any help?” ,she asks.

“No we are fine”, MaGasa says

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MaThabethe smiles.

“Let me go and change the linen in my sons rooms, come and help me Busisile” , she says

“What about me?”, MaGasa is not happy with what MaThabethe is saying. MaJili walks in.

“She will help you" She pulls me out.

“Don't let them bully you" , She says with a smile and I nod.

“Are you always quiet ? " she asks.

“My mother says I should speak when spoken to" , I say.

“Well I am quiet as well but don't take nonsense.” She says and I nod.

“We are going to start with Philisani's room then move to Bongani's and end with Mabutho ”, I nod.

We start with the room that she had mentioned. I help her out and she is talking much more. She asks me if I have slept with Mphembe and I tell her , not as yet. He always sleeps when he is with me and I wonder. She laughs when I say that and says he is growing old and his body can't handle the weight too. That is true , I even learned that my husband is 69 I am shook and

don't even know what to say. He is that old really ? Wow ,my father is not even that age.

She hints that she is in her 50's but she doesn't look a day over 40. She looks a bit fresh. She is dark skinned like me and is thick in the right places. Hips , Small stomach and big butt. Thighs and all. I am slim and short but dark skinned.

We go into the 3rd room and I am putting the pillow case when the door opens and some man walks in while he is on his phone. He does look like Mphembe and has his mother's skin colour.

“Look Sandy I will call you later”, he hangs up and MaThabethe goes to hug him. I move away from the bed when I am done.

“Oh my child , you have grown so much ” ,she keeps on touching his broad shoulders, does he stick fight ? He looks fit.

“MaThabethe Ninjani?(mom how are you?)” , he throw throws a bag on the bed and I move to the door.

“I will be in the main house” , I say.

“Oh wait, Mabutho this is your mother , call her Mamncane” , he frowns . His lips are a bit pink and are thick like.

“Wait , you are telling me dad married Zanele ? ”, I am not Zanele !

“Yes , She is your father's wife”

“He could be arrested for this! ” , he is scary. His voice is more deeper than I thought.

“Calm down Mabutho. Respect this ” , she reprimids.

“No , this is absurd. The others need to know about this. Sekuya kude manje MaThabethe (This is going too far MaThabethe)”, he walks out banging the door and she sighs. Ok that was an experience.

“They will cause havoc. Don't mind them ” , she smiles.

“Let me go and help out”, I say

“You are young. They are bound to behave that way. You should be in varsity like Zanele and the rest. Don't you want to go there?”, she asks.

“Will Mphembe agree?”, I want to.

“I will talk to him. ”, I nod.

People walk in and all eyes on me. 6 men and 3 women. I assume it's the rest of the kids. The working ones.

“Never , this is just witchcraft!” , one woman shouts.

“Baba ! ” They all walk out.

“Kodwa Mabutho (My goodness Mabutho)” , MaThabethe says.

A family meeting was held. The Nkosinathi who would have the ceremony is here and the ladies look the same. They have silky hair and nails with long shoes. I am similar with the wives , Mphembe brought up the matter of me being his wife and the older kids didn't agree , it came with more commotion when they discovered my age. Nkosinathi was used to reference of how this marriage is absurd that he is 43 yet his father married someone younger than him.

He is the oldest son, the first born child and then after the rest follow. Mabutho and Mbuso who is MaJili's son share a birthday. This is really abnormal and freaky in this family. I just don't understand everything that happens in this family. I saw that MaKhumalo wanted to side 100 percent with the children in the matter of me taken back home and I couldn't agree more but university. MaThabethe said she will talk to Mphembe. I will try as well on my side to fight. It's my night today with him so I have to prepare my room for him to come. After the meeting we head to the kitchen so we can dish up for everyone.

“MaSibisi ”, I am on my feet as he walks in.

He comes and pulls me by my tiny waist and I collide with his stomach and he kisses my cheek and then my lips. I am learning

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“You were quiet today”, he sits on the bed and I go down on my knees and take his shoes off.

“I didn't have anything to say” , I say.

“I want us to have kids, I am getting old now ”, he says and I can't say no.

“Yebo baba ” , he smiles .

I remove his shoes and take the bathing basin that has water inside and I wash his feet with care and take my time to nurse them.

“The others don't do what you do” he says after I am done and have discarded the water. I guess it is washing his feet. He is under the covers.

“Mphembe”, I say

“Yes” , I fiddle with my fingers

“I would like to go to university as well” , I have gathered some courage.

“What do you want to study?” , I look at him and look down.

“I don't know. ” , I love nature. Good thing I have made it to matric but don't have a higher education.

“How about agriculture, working in one of my farms than going to university?” I nod. I am not going to university and it is as clear as that.

“Ok”

He pulls me to him.

“I will talk to one of the managers about that” I nod.

He yawns and closes his eyes slowly and he is asleep, you see what I mean ? He always sleeps early.

Chapter 2

It's the day of the ceremony. Everything was conducted very well for Nkosinathi, Bhuti Nkosinathi if I could say. It feels weird to call someone who is older than you by name and then Mom. Goats were slaughtered and also a sheep as well. People were coming in numbers just to eat this meat and have free food . People who will be merry with us for a bit. I saw Dudu walking in with her sister and I excused myself from where I was and went to her.

“Sisi” she hugs me and I hug her as well.

“How are you?” she asks.

“I am well. You came” she nods

“Come let me dish up for you” we went away so I can dish up for them.

“So how is everything? How is your marriage?”, I sigh. I really want to go home.

“His kids don't like me ”, I say

“They don't have a choice. Besides you are their step mother so they have to respect that ”, she adds.

We get to the food station and they take a plate.

“I am 21 Dudu. Cabanga indoda ena 43 enengane eshadile ingibiza umah (Imagine a 43 year old married man who has kids calling me mom)”, she giggled.

“You will be fine ”, she says

“Mamncane ! ”, it's one of the kids.

“MaThabethe is asking for you ”, I nod.

“I will be back. ”, I say to Dudu.

“We will be fine ”, I walk off going to the main house.

MaThabethe was seated with other women. She smiles as soon as she sees me. I think she likes me a tad bit too much.

“Mah”, I say softly.

She comes towards me.

“One of the older boys was looking for isthebe. Please can you take it to them. ”

We walk to the kitchen together. I don't want to go to where the older children are. I swallow as she hands me isthebe with the cow head and steam bread on it.

“Will you handle going alone?”, she asks.

“No ”, I say softly.

She giggles.

“They don't bite. Bayahlonipha abafana bami(my boys are respectful)”, well yesterday was something else from respect.

What choice do I have ? I take the food and I make my way to the outside. I go to where the older boys are and they are seated apart from the old men sharing jokes from the way they are laughing. Just looking at them you wouldn't miss the resemblance between them even if you tried to. I get to them and they all keep their silence.

“Sanibonani ”, I greet. I didn't know how a step mother acts to her older step sons.

I place what is needed to be left and I turn around.

“Kini bakufindise ukuthanda obaba abadala (At your home did they teach you to love older men ?)”, I turn around.

“Angizwanga ?(excuse me ?)”,I say

“Cebo calm down”,I don't know who it is but he says that to the varsity freak.

“Its the truth though”,this Cebo boy says.

I am just shocked and don't even know how to respond at this moment. I just turn and walk away as another comment shoots behind me. Tears are clouding my eyes. I can't take well in insults or any of the sly comments ever made towards me. I moved to my room and closed the door as soon as I arrived and let the tears flow. I threw myself on the bed and cried.

I am a bad host. Dudu must have left now so as her sister. I will see her some other time as well. It's the next day and I am dreading to go out but I want to get done with my chores and maybe run to the river or something for my peace of mine today. I get bath water and I bath. I still don't think the rain water will be good for me. I don't like it for now. I get done and get dressed and make my way to the main house. I find MaThabethe and MaJili sitting and drinking some tea.

“Hawu ntombi ekuseni kanje(Why are you up early?)”, MaThabethe asks with a smile.

“I couldn't sleep anymore”, she smiles

“There is some left overs. I didn't see you yesterday”,MaJili says.

She is a nice woman who doesn't speak much. You hardly hear her.

“Thank you mah”, I get the food and sit down eating.

The door opens and the Cebo from yesterday enters. I stop eating and look down as he shoots a look my way.

“Good morning boh mah”, he said.

“Sawubona. Unjani?(Hello, How are you?)”, they ask him.

“Besides the sour news we heard when we came here I am good”, he comments while shooting a look my way.

“Cebolabantuli, don't start”, MaJili warns.

He keeps his silence but you can see that he is not pleased with seeing me here.

“I will eat later”, I say as I make my way towards the door.

“You should eat now before everyone wakes up”, MaThabethe says.

“Ngiyabonga Mah kodwa ngizobuye ngidle(Thank you but I will eat later)”, I say before I quickly make my way out of the house.

I close my eyes for a moment feeling the cold morning breeze on my skin. I wish I could go home. I didn't endure this much of insults before but I can't go home. It's not my home anymore. When I got married my parents told me that I am not a Sibisi

anymore but a Ntuli, therefore I am no longer their child but a child of the Ntuli family. I need to get some water so I make my way to my room and I get inside and take a bucket and a scarf before I walk out before anymore sees me and starts throwing not so nice comments my way.

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I made my way to the river. The sun was already up now and I am sure all the wives are now awake. We all wake up early everyday just to get our chores done. I was walking slowly while going to the river so that I don't quickly go back home but I have to some time because Mphembe wouldn't be happy that I was out for so long. I get to the river and I find some women here to get some water as well.

“Busisile!”, I turn to whomever is calling me and it's Dudu.

She leaves her bucket and comes running my way.

“Haibo Ufunani lah?(What are you doing here?)”

“I am here to fetch some water”, I say.

She frowns.

“Doesn't the yard have water from the taps?”, I bite my bottom lip.

“Khuluma nami, konke kukahle?(Talk to me, is everything okay?)”, I nod while tears are prickling my eyes.

I wipe them quickly.

“Yes, everything is okay, bengifuna ukushawa umoya nje(I wanted to get some fresh air)”, She looks at me puzzled but doesn't probe on the matter.

I was taught not to talk about my marital matters to outsiders even my sister wives shouldn't know as well. I have to keep it all to myself.

“Let me help you get some water then”, she says.

I nod and we go towards the river. We speak about yesterday and she is lighting up at that. She speaks more of My step sons and I know that she is taken by one of them if not all. Dudu is the only close friend I have. I do have others but like me some of them are married either to the King or Induna. After having our little chat we said our good byes and went our separate ways.

I felt a bit better and good after going to the river. I think I needed that walk just to calm down and also clear my mind at the same time. I hum a little song as I am walking back home to occupy myself while walking and I finally get there with some time. I see men stick fighting and it's Mphembe's children. I walk into the yard and I stand there for a moment looking at

them stick fighting. The varsity freaks seem to know what they are doing with the older ones.

“Ningalimazani(Don't hurt each other!)”,One of the wives shouts from inside the house.

They carry on with stick fighting as I am watching them do so.

“Mamncane, Uyakucela umama endlini(Mama is asking for you inside the house)”

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I look at the little one who is tapping me as she is calling me.

I keep forgetting their names but I will just work with ‘Ngane Yami’ for now.

“Okay, let's go”,We move from her stick fighting brothers and make our way inside to the main house and Makhumalo is here as well. I place the bucket down and greet.

“Hawu where do you come from?”,It's MaThabethe asking.

“From the river”,I bite my bottom lip after saying that.

MaGasa claps her hands.

“Soyaleka ilengane”,she says.

“Your food is here. I want you to do my hair after eating”,MaThabethe says.

I nod.

“Thank you”, She smiles and I go and get my food.

I settle on one of the kitchen chairs and I start eating my food with them busy with cleaning and cooking as well. When I am done I go and wash the dishes with MaMsomi that were used by everyone. When we are done we pack the dishes away and then we clean up where we were washing the dishes. After we are done I go to my room. Today is my day off. We exchange routines when cleaning so that some get to rest while others are cleaning. Plus their kids are here so it is much easier for them to work. I get into my room and MaThabethe follows inside as well with a chair.

“Kuyashisa laphakathi. Kunganjani sihlale ngaphandle(It's hot in here, how about we sit outside?)”

“There is no problem”, I say and she nods.

I take her chair from her and we go outside. I place the chair and ask her to sit down. I can do hair. Well all I can do are cornrows only and I self taught myself how to do them.

MaThabethe gives me her hairfood and comb and I take off her doek. This woman is beautiful , she has nice big afro that is showing most grey hair but also has some of her black colour. She still looks fresh though. It's like Ugeza ngobisi(She bathes in milk). That is how beautiful she looks.

“Sekade wagcina umuntu ukwenza Ikhanda (It has been so long since a person did their hair)”,She says.

“Your hair is nice”,She smiles.

“Thank you. You are beautiful Busisile”,She says and I shy down.

“Thank you Mah”

I start applying hairfood on her hair after opening a few lines.

“Don't mind these kids. They will come around.”,she says.

I hope they do because I also don't like this but I have to be here because Mphembe chose me amongst all the girls that were there at the reed dance.

I do MaThabethe's hair while we are sharing a conversation and watching the small kids playing with some of the older ones. They seem happy and the yard allows them. It is very big and accommodates everyone. As we are speaking with MaThabethe she shares how she Met Mphembe and actually indicates that she is not from here in the rural area but is actually from the city. She says she is from Lamontville in Durban but she hasn't been home in some time. You wouldn't say from the way she is. I don't even know where that is but she explained to me where it is. I don't blame Mphembe from not being taken by her, I mean she is very beautiful inside and outside. Who wouldn't love a soul like her? We carry on talking and I get done with her

hair in record time. I go inside and get a small mirror and bring it to her and she looks at herself.

“Wangenza umuntu MaSibisi!” ,she says while touching her hair.

“Kuhle?(It's beautiful?)” ,I ask

“Kakhulu(Very)” ,She seems happy with what I did on her hair.

“I am glad you like it” ,She smiles and looks at me and hands me the mirror.

“Thank you so much” ,She takes the doek and ties it on her head.

We start cleaning up together and she takes her chair. We have to go and eat as well. I am a bit hungry I won't lie but with how things are here I am dreading going inside the main house and bumping into one of Mphembe's kids from the city.

MABUTHO

One thing about these family gatherings is that my work has to pause for a moment and right now I am in a space where my work can't pause. I am working on a big deal right now of securing a contract deal with some major supermarkets here in South Africa for them to sell our products in stores and some of

the major companies in the dairy department. It's not easy but when you are passionate about something you can get it done. Some would say I got this love for farming from my dad of which is true but also I love getting my hands dirty. My father was most thrilled when he learnt that out of all his kids at least one of them would carry on his legacy of his farms and I am doing so.

I am in my room at this moment and the sun is set already. Supper has been served and now everyone is at the rondaval singing some songs and dancing as well. It always happens when we are all here. Sandy has sent me an email and I needed to check it before going to join everyone on their celebration. Also Mandisa wasn't happy that I left for home but soon next year she would be left alone but will be part of the Ntuli family. I need to settle down now. It's about time. I am 34 for goodness sake that has to imply something right ? That it is about time I settle down.

“Mabutho”, A knock comes from the door and it opens.

I stand up from my bed and my father walks in my room.

“Baba”

“Wazivalela lah, kwenzenjani?(Why are you locking yourself up in here?)”

“I needed to get some work done baba”

“You can't spare a few days off work?”,he asks

“I can't, I am working on a big deal that could benefit us all”,He smiles.

“I am happy to hear that Kuqhuba Kahle. (Everything is going well)”,he says.

“Thank you”

“You took my small farm and made it something big”,I did. I really did.

I just nod and the smile faded off his face.

“Eh uMancane ufuna ukuyofunda (The young wife wants to go and study)”,I still can't digest the fact that my father married someone who is 13 years younger than me.

“Mmmh”

“I don't want her to go there and see boys her age and start liking them”

“Oh, I hear you”,why is he telling me this?

”I was thinking she works at the farm. Asize khona(And help there)”

“Baba...” ,I try to interject.

“Mabutho angiceli, bengikwazisa(I wasn't asking. I was telling you)”,I huff.

“Won't you need her to make some children or something?”

“Not for now. She is still new. I want her to settle first”, I frown.

“You will leave with her”, he turns and walks out.

Fuck! What am I going to do about this situation? I can't do that. I don't even think I have space for her to work or do anything. She is not educated even so that is a no.

BUSISILE

This family may be something else but they are quiet joyful when they want to be. I have only been here for two months and I am sure everyone is expecting me to have a child by now with Mphembe but I am still sealed and he hasn't touched me as yet, how will I have his children when he hasn't touched me as yet? I asked to be excused early for the night but before I could go and rest I was called by Mphembe to his room. I made my way there. What could it be? Did I do something wrong? Maybe it's about me going to the river and he found out. My mind had so many things but I tried to calm down and see what he wants. I knocked on the door of his room when I got inside

the main house and I heard a come in. I got inside and bowed my head.

“You were asking for me”,I say softly.

“Close the door and sit down”,I close the door and grab a grass mat and sit down on it while facing the floor.

“I thought about your request on going to university...”,I hope I am going.

“I won't allow that. You won't go to university”,I feel my heart shattering.

“Yebo baba”, I feel like crying.

“But I talked to My son Mabutho and you will leave with him going to work at the farm”,he says.

“Yebo baba”

“Behave yourself MaSibisi. Angivamile ukudedela abafazi bami kodwa ngiyakudedela Wena(I am not used to letting my wives go but I will let you go)”,The fact that I am leaving with his child. The same child that is part of the people who hates that I am married to their father.

“Ngiyabonga Mphembe (Thank you Mphembe)”

“Please get bath water and come to bath my legs like always”,he asks.

“Yebo baba”, I get off the mat and fold it before placing it away then I walk out of the bedroom.

I pass on of his daughters and she looks at me and clicks her tongue before walking off. I sigh before going to prepare his bathing water.

Chapter 3

I woke up early this morning. I was woken up by one of the little ones and I was told that I should bath and get ready. I don't know what for but I am still a tad bit sad that I will not go to university but at least I will do something. It's just being in the same area as his children drains me. I know I am very much younger than my husband but they have to accept now because I am here and I doubt I will be going anywhere. I go and make the fire for bathing and I make my way to the main house to make some food. Mphembe walks in as I am busy in the kitchen.

“Sawubona baba(Good Morning)”, I say and light up the kettle to make some tea for him.

“Good morning Nkosikazi, I see the children woke you up”, I nod.

“Yes”

“Ngiyaxolisa ukuk'vusa ekuseni kanje (I am sorry to wake you up this early)”,he says.

“It is no problem”,he smiles.

I take out some maize meal to start with making porridge for him.

“The other wives will make the porridge. Ungazihluphi likahle itiyi(Don't bother yourself, tea is fine)”

“Okay”,I say softly.

“You are leaving today, Mabutho is leaving early. They called him and said there is a problem somehow so he has to leave early”,I didn't expect to leave this early.

“Now?”,I ask

“Yes, that is why I said they should wake you up so you can prepare”,He fiddles in his pockets and places a few hundreds on the counter.

“Uthenge ozokudinga made ufika Leh. Bengifisa siyothenga izinto ngaphambi kokuthi uhambe(Buy things you will need that side. I wished we could've bought these things before you left)”,he says.

“Ngiyabonga Mphembe, kwande kuwe(Thank you)”,he comes to my side and squeezes me close to his portbelly.

I hold my breath for a moment and he lets me go.

“Go and bath Ave ebhoka UMabutho Uma izinto zihamba kancane(Mabutho is impatient)”,He says.

I nod.

“Thank you again”

“Uziphathe Kahle(Behave yourself)”

“I will”,I go and make some tea for him and take mine and some bread and I go to my room and bath.

After I am done with bathing I eat and then I go and discard my dirty water. I take my small phone and shove it in my bag. I got it when I first came here. Mphembe bought it for me and said he will buy me a bigger phone once I get the hang of using phones. I know how to use phones but I don't use them as often. I still have airtime from when he bought the phone for me so I will call when I arrive where I am going just to ease his conscious. I wish I had Dudu's number but she doesn't have a phone as yet.

I hear a car outside roaring and a knock comes on my door.

“I am coming”,I check if I took everything I will need and check if my doek is in place.

I then move to the door and I open it and walk out and then Lock the door.

“Busisile”, Mphembe calls me and I go towards him and he is standing next to the driver's window.

“Don't mistreat my wife Mabutho”, Mphembe says to the person inside the car.

What I know is Mabutho is MaThabethe's son. I presume her last born.

“I won't. We need to leave”

“Come”, Mphembe says and opens the front door for me and I get inside.

I thank him.

“Call me when you arrive there”, I nod.

Soon the car was reversing out of the yard and off it went. It was silent and no one was talking. The only thing that made sound was the radio and I managed to get the time. It's 5 am, maybe everyone is really tired for them to not wake up at this time. I am worried that I left without Mphembe eating. I look out of the window and look at everything that we are passing with the car.

“What Qualifications do you have?”, I snap out of my outside watching moment and turn to this man next to me.

“Excuse me?”

“What Degree do you uphold in the Agricultural department?”, I bite my bottom lip and sigh.

“Nothing but I finished my Matric”, he turns and looks at me for moment and then keeps his silence.

“People your age are in university not getting married but sothini, isemakhaya lah. It's the other way around(This is the rural area)”, he says and I keep quiet and look out of the window.

I just wish we could get to where we are going right now.

The drive was a tad bit long one. I have never been outside the village so this was my first time. We made a stop at the garage and I needed to use the bathroom for a moment while Mabutho wanted to fill the tank of his car with Petrol. I went to the bathroom after getting some directions and then use it. When I was done I got out and made my way to the car where he was and it seems like he was done. Just that they were busy with the tires and checking if they are okay I presume. He looks so much like his mother but you can see his father's features there. He stands up when done with the petrol attendant and then he fiddles in his pocket and hands some money to him. I get inside the car at that moment and wait. He gets inside after some time and starts the car.

“There are snacks Ncane”, he says and hands a plastic to me.

“Thank you”,it feels weird really being referred to Mamncane by the older ones.

We drive out from the petrol station and on the road we are again. The sun is now up and it's getting hot by the minute. I start having some chips and make sure that I don't make a mess in the car. At that tip the music is disturbed by ringing and it seems like someone is calling him.

“Baby”

It's a woman's voice.

“How are you?”

“I am on my way back to the farm right now”,Mabutho says to the lady.

“Okay,Are you busy today?”

“You can come through in the morning but in the afternoon I have a meeting”

“Okay, you will find me there”

“Okay,I love you. I will see you”

“I love you more”,The call gets cut and the music comes back on.

I keep my silence and carry on with eating the chips.

I hope I make friends wherever I am going.

I think I fell asleep through the journey because I was woken up by Mabutho and when I look around I see a big yard and a beautiful house in front of it. This must be the farm and is this his house? I look around for a moment before I get out of the car following him. There is a car parked up front the yard. A nice red one at that. He wheels his suitcase as we are walking inside the house and leaves it by the door step.

“Mandisa!” ,he shouts and places his car keys on the key holder.

Wow! This house is magnificent. It has some glass walls where you can see the other side of this yard and you can see the farm side in a distance and the stable. This is amazing. The design of this house is out of this world. It's like I am in a little heaven.

“I am coming baby!” ,A woman's voice speaks.

I am standing by the door step looking like a lost sheep. A beautiful woman appears wearing an apron and goes towards Mabutho and they share a kiss. I stand there and look down as they are kissing. I hold onto my bag that moment.

“I have missed you” ,the woman says.

“I did as well, home was okay”

“Who is this?”, Her tone can't be missed. I lift my head up and look her way.

She seems not pleased to see me and looks at Mabutho waiting for an answer.

“This is my step mother MaSibisi”

She frowns more upon hearing that.

“You mean your father's wife?”, he nods.

She claps her hands.

“You can go upstairs Ncane”, I nod.

I make my way up.

“Don't get lost in the main bedroom!”

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The Mandisa woman says.

I keep quiet as I make my way up and I go and find a room. I see one that seems empty with no bedding. Does it mean no one sleeps in this room? I place my bag on the bed and I walk towards the window and there is a sliding door. It leads outside. I go towards it and place my hands on the railing and look outside. This green space looks amazing, like a breath of fresh air. I am going to love waking up to this everyday.

I move from there and I go and take my bag and take out my phone. I dial Mphembe and it rings a few times but no one answers. I try him again and it does the same thing. I try MaThabethe because I only have her number and it goes through.

“Ewu boh, sesizwa ngendaba ukuthi awusekho(We hear from people that you are gone)",that is the first thing she says.

“I am sorry, kuvele kwaba yinto esheshayo(It became an urgent thing)”,I say.

“Its okay,. Did you arrive safely?”

“Yes I did. I couldn't get hold of Mphembe"

“He went out with Maka'Nkosinathi”,oh that explains it.

“Okay,I wanted to tell him I arrived well”

“I will pass on the message. I am happy you are doing something than to sit with us old folks”,she laughs.

“I hope I can do everything required of me”

“You will. I hope you like it there”, already I am loving the view.

“Ite beautiful here”,I say

“It is”,she says.

“I have to go, these kids are fighting. I will call you later sisi”

“Okay Mah”, we hang up that moment.

I go back to where I was and hold onto the railing. This looks amazing.

I was seated by the dinner table alone. The couple locked themselves in the bedroom after Mabutho came back from where he went to and I stayed up to eat. I am not used to eating these green leaves but atleast they have some meat. Yes, sis Mandisa is the one who cooked or made it should I say. I drink some water and eat up all the food. I don't want to leave it and disappoint all her efforts that went into making this food. When I was done I went to wash the dishes that were left in the sink. After I was done I went to the room I will be using. I find the bedding there and I take it and lay it properly on the bed and then when I am done I change out of my clothes and wear my night dress. Mphembe hasn't called me and I am presume that he is still with MaKhumalo. It must be her day today. I close my eyes and fall asleep.

It's the next day, a new day in a new environment. I have woken up early as I could but one thing I couldn't do is bath on time. There is the rain water here and I am not used to it. I don't even know how to operate this thing. I will ask where I can get a bathing basin and also where I can make the fire to bath. I clean my room and when I am done I take my towel and

and I go and brush my teeth before I leave my room and make my way down stairs. I get downstairs and I look around to find Mandisa or Mabutho.

“Ncane”, I turn around to find Mabutho ascending down the stairs.

“Bhuti”, I softly say.

He is wearing kaki shorts and a top as well.

“You look lost”, he is not disrespectful like Cebo is.

“I wanted to ask for a bathing basin”, he frowns.

“There is a shower in your room”, I sigh and close my eyes.

“I saw it but I can't use it”, I say softly fiddling with my fingers.

“Mandisa left but I can help”, My heart skips a beat.

“I will open and adjust the water for you, come”, he says and I follow after him as he rushes up the stairs.

This stairs thing will also take time for me to get used to. We get to the room I am using and he goes into the bathroom and opens the shower door. He then opens the taps.

“You open them like this”, I nod slowly.

“This is for hot and this is for cold water”, he does it with ease.

“Thank you”

“You can bath so I can show you the work you need to do”,he says.

“Okay”,I look at him and he walks out of the bathroom. I breathe out and I get inside the rain water after taking off my clothes.

I take off my doek and get onto bathing. This is nice yet quick by the time I am done my hair is wet. I feel like crying as it is. I should've did it instead of letting it loose. I get out of the shower and grab a towel near by and put it over my head. I wipe my body with my towel and I go and get dressed. I am annoyed that my head is wet. I wear a dress and my pumps and when I am done I walk out of the bedroom with the towel still on my head. I ascend down the stairs and I hear some little laughter.

I get down and I find Mabutho with some man. The man looks my way.

“Sanibonani”

“Sawubona Ntokazi(Hello)”,The man says.

“Ncane, this is Sbu. He works here. You will work with him”

“Awu basi usungifuna ngiganiwe manje(Boss, you want me married now)”,I shy away.

“No”,the man laughs.

“You won't work with a towel”

“My hair is wet. I can't put a doek”, I softly say before taking the towel off and my hair falls to my face.

I push it back and look up as someone starts clearing their throat.

“You can start going to work”, Mabutho takes the towel away from me and he walks off.

I follow the Sbu guy and we go to a mini car. He tells me to hop inside and I do so. He then drives towards the stable and I look around in admiration of this place. We get there and hop out of the cart.

“Do you know how to milk cows?”, Sbu asks while chuckling.

“Yes”, I do know. My father used to do so and he taught me.

“Kwakhleke. Umuhle Ntokazi(Good. You are beautiful)”, I shy away.

“Thank you”, He smiles and starts with us going to the first cow.

“This one just gave birth so there is a lot of milk”, he says while grabbing a bucket and then he brings a small stool.

He rolls up his overall sleeves and he crouches and I do the same.

“Awenze sibone(Do it and let's see)”,I start milking the cow. I am enjoying doing this.

“You really can”,Was he doubting me?

I think I am going to love learning here.

Chapter 4

I get excited just for another day to go and milk the cows. He it might be something small but to me it's a big job. I just milk a bucket per day. There are a lot of cows here in this stable and no Sbu doesn't get to milk the rest of them. There is a machine for that and that is what it does.

“You are a bit quick today”, It's Sbu.

“I am getting used to it”, yes I have been.

It has been two weeks since I started being here and I am getting the hang of things.

“You are a fast learner.”, he says.

“I wish I could find a wife like you”, He continues.

He has been saying that for the past two weeks I have been here.

“I am married”, I say my everyday verse when he starts.

“Hawu Busi”, I shake my head.

Yes he calls me that. I get done with my bucket and he comes towards me.

“Let me help you carry it”, he says.

“Okay”,he takes the bucket and walks out as I follow him.

I place my hands on my head and try to tie my doek well enough to secure it. I follow after Sbu and thank him when he places the bucket outside.

“You can go and relax now Ntokazi”,he says.

“Can't I help anywhere?”,I really don't want to go inside the house. Mandisa was here and she made sure she left a mess.

“No, amadoda akhona sosebenza(Men are here and we will work)”,he says.

I sigh.

“Okay, bye Sbu”

“Uhambe Kahle Ntokazi(Go well)”,I smile and walk inside the house.

I close the door and turn around sighing.

“Oh, sawubona”,I greet Mabutho who is on his laptop.

“Sawubona Ncane",That makes me feel old.

“Please call me Busisile Bhuti”,He looks at me and then nods.

I move from the door and go up the stairs to my room. I get there and close the door, the fresh air coming into the room makes the environment a bit soothing. I see something on the bed and I go there and it's big gift box. I wonder where it came

from. Could it be from Mphembe and he sent it here? I sit on the bed and I open the box inside and it has a sun hat with small sized farming boots and shorts with a top. I rummage through inside and it has hair ties as well. I find a card and I open it inside.

“Working with Skirts and dresses can be uncomfortable Ncane”, I smiled.

This is nice of Mabutho. It really is and I never expected something like this from him or any of Mphembe's children. I should go and thank him. I close the box and make my way out of my room going down the stairs. I get there to the bottom and I see that he is still busy with his work.

“Bhuti..”, I clear my throat and he turns to me.

“Ncane”, I look down and fiddle with my fingers.

“Ngiyabonga(Thank you)”, I say.

“Oh, you mean the clothes”, I nod.

“Yes, thank you”

“It's a pleasure mah”, Oh my god. I look up and he seems amused with saying that.

“Please don't call me Mah, I am too young for that”, he chuckles.

“Okay Mancane”,he goes back to his work seemingly amused.

I turn around to go up stairs when he speaks.

“And from tomorrow on Ncane there are no doeks allowed at work”,I turn around and touch my head.

“I can't work without it”

“Its the rules.”,I huff and nod.

“Yes sir”,I turn around and walk up the stairs leaving him there.

“Ncane!”,I huff upon this man calling me.

I am already frustrated with him saying I should stop wearing a doek. I get down te stairs and I stand by the steps.

“Mabutho”,he raises his head and looks at me.

“Mandisa is not coming back and I can't...”,I know where this is going.

“Ngizopheka. Ufuna ukudla Ini?(I will cook. What do you want to eat?)”,thank God we won't have any rabbit food today.

“Anything you like”,I nod.

“Okay”

I make my way up the stairs. I will cook later in the day for now I need to rest. All the energy I had to help out vanished a while ago.

“Yebo baba, Yonkinto isahamba Kahle(Everything is going well)”,I say softly.

I am talking to Mphembe through the phone while I am in the kitchen about to prepare to cook.

“Kungcono makusahamba Kahle. Nabodade wenu bakahle(It is good that everything is going well, your sister wives are okay as well)”,He says.

“Please greet them for me”

“I will, I miss you and your foot baths”,He says.

I smile and look down.

“I will give you one when I come back”

“I will hold you to that”,he says

“Mmh”.

“Let me leave. It's late

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I will call you tomorrow”,he says.

“Okay, good bye”

He hangs up and I put the phone down and I turn around to take out the ingredients I will need to make some food. I look at

the stove and it looks fancy, I don't know how to operate it. I walk out of the kitchen and I go and find Mabutho. It's already getting late and I want to be done. I look for him at the lounge and I can't find him.

“Bhuti !”,I stand by the stairs.

I wait for a moment before I see him come out from the rooms that are at the bottom floor.

“Ncane?”,I sigh.

“I don't know how to open the stove”,I say

“Okay”,he walks to the kitchen and I follow him.

He has been nice to me. Most of Mphembe's children are not happy that I am married to their father and he was also unhappy. Maybe he has just accepted the situation.

“Its a Gas stove”,he says and opens the stove.

“Ohw I see”,I go around the counter just go see.

“Here you go”,he gets done.

“Thank you”,he looks at me and nods.

“If you need anything you can call”, I smile.

“That’s nice of you”,he chuckles.

“I am not usually as nice”,he says.

“Well so far you are nice”,he smirks and goes to the sink and washes his hands.

“There is some fresh Millie that Sbu brought today.”

“Should I cook some?”

“If you want to,I will help”,he says.

“Okay, I need some knives and everything else”,he chuckles.

“Everything else?”

“Spices? The ones similar to...” ,he goes to the cardboards and opens them and he takes out some spices and puts them on the counter.

“Thank you”,I say

“My mother loves to use these when she cooks”

“She is a great cook”,I say

“She is”,he says and stares at me. I look away for a moment from his little gaze.

“May I have some vegetables”,he nods and moves away.

I breathe out for a moment.

MABUTHO

I left the kitchen when it seemed like she didn't need my help for that moment. I kept on peaking through the kitchen window just to look at her move around the kitchen. Just a few days ago I didn't want her here but now I feel a bit glad my father pushed it. She is my step mother for goodness sake but it doesn't shy away from how taken I feel right now. I feel like I am loosing my mind especially at night when I lay and think about her. I couldn't get that image of her wet hair over her beautiful skin. She is beautiful why is she hiding it? I want to see it everyday. Every morning even. I bite my bottom lip, she is my father's wife but I can't help myself. I have to try by all means to fight whatever that I am feeling. I am in love with Mandisa. I am going to marry Mandisa soon and I have to get my act straight.

“Mabutho!”,The way she softly calls out my name.

“I am coming!”,I say from the outside.

“Okay”,I love her voice. Everything about her just changes the perspective I had of her.

I sigh while closing my eyes and breathe in and out before making my way inside the house.

“The food is ready”,she says turning swiftly my way.

“Thank you”,she smiles and I feel like my heart is melting.

“You can go and sit down. I will dish up so long”,she says.

I nod my head slowly before making my way to the lounge. I settle and open some TV just to keep myself occupied. I don't live with Mandisa but we visits more frequently than ever. I met Mandisa in Varsity and that's when we hit thing off and got to know each other. I was interested in her and still is. She gave a farm boy like me a chance to be with her. As I am thinking about Mandisa, Busisile walks in with a bowel that has some warm water and a swab. She comes and kneels infront of me and I am in awe.

“Please don't kneel”,I say

“Wash your hands please”,I do so as I look at her and thank her once I wipe my hands. She stands up and goes away.

She comes back with a trey with food and she goes on her knees and serve me.

“Thank you Ncane”,she nods and gets up and walks off.

It's beef stew and rice. It had been so long since I had a home cooked meal this side. Usually I have it when my mother is here visiting so apart from being home recently it has been some time.

BUSISILE

I ate alone and gave Mabutho the time to have his meal alone. Plus we are not friends just house mates who seemingly are making each other's living fair and okay. I got done with eating and got on with the dishes before I went to retire to sleep. I don't have anything else to do that will keep me busy so why not rest now. Tomorrow it is going to be a long day so I will have to rest quiet quickly and have some time to relax my body for a moment.

It's the next morning and I am up and ready for the day. I have bathed already using the shower and I am getting used to using it. I decided to wear what Mabutho bought for me yesterday and I am happy and grateful for the thoughtful gift that I had recieved. Some of the workers wear this but also him. Majority of the time it's him who wears like this. I have never worn a short or pants before so this will be my first time. I get dressed and when I am done I stand infront of the mirror and look at myself. I run my fingers through my tangles afro hair and I comb it out with my fingers nicely and it does get done. I see the hair ties that are in the gift box and I take them out and tie my hair backwards and I look okay after. I smile at myself while looking into the mirror. I look young for a moment. I also feel young. I shake my head and put everything away before I get

out of the bedroom and I make my way downstairs. The house has a person who makes breakfast for everyone who works here. Even Sbu has some breakfast with us in the morning. I get downstairs and I could hear the frying sounds. I enter the dining room.

“Good morning”, I say softly.

“Ohw Ntokazi Waze wayeba inhliziyo Yami namuhla. Waze wamuhle (Oh baby, you have stolen my heart today. You look beautiful)”, it's Sbu and his comments.

I smile and look down.

“Thank you”, I softly say.

“Come let me open the chair for you”, he stands up and opens the chair for me and I sit down thanking him.

Mabutho doesn't look at me at the moment. The food comes and it is placed on the table. Other workers come and join us and they greet us.

“Today you won't be working at the stable”, Mabutho says and lifts his head to look at me.

“Where will I be working?”

“I have a meeting today, you will be coming with me to help out”, he says and silence falls upon the table.

“But I...” ,I really enjoy working at the stable. I don't know anything about meetings.

“I have said my final piece” ,he says with much authority and I nod while swallowing.

“Yes sir” ,he goes to eating his food and I have lost my appetite but I will eat.

Chapter 5

After the morning breakfast people left to go and do their duties while I waited for Mabutho. He is taking his time but I won't say anything. I am just unhappy that I won't be going to the stable. As much as Sbu keeps on sweet talking me but I actually enjoy working with him. He is a good person to work with. I am seated on the couch in the lounge waiting for Mabutho when he ascends down the stairs wearing more or less the same thing I am wearing.

“Let's go”, He says and grabs his car keys from the key holder.

I get up from the couch and follow after him as we are walking out of the house. The lights of his car flicker and he goes to the passenger side and opens the door for me. I get inside the car.

“Thank you”, he nods before closing the door.

He goes to the other side and gets inside and he starts the car and he drives off. I keep my silence in the car and he does the same. Only the music is playing inside the car. I look outside the window to keep myself occupied as we pass nothing but green land for some time. I wonder where this meeting is and I am getting really curious about where we are going. I hear him heave a heavy sigh at that. After some time we get to another place and it seems like another farm. I keep quiet and look out

to see who's farm this may be. He drives in as the gate opens and he seems to know the security man at the gate because they greet each other like old friends. He drives further in and parks up ahead as the car comes to a stop. He takes off his seat belt and I do the same as he gets out of the car and comes towards my side and opens the door for me and lays his hand out for me to take. I thank him at that and some guy appears out of nowhere.

“Ntuli! kuhamba kanjani mfowethu(How is it going my brother?)”

“Kuhamba Kahle kuwena?(Everything is going well, your side?)”, They share a hand shake.

“Everything is well.”

“This is Busisile, Busisile this is Nkanyezi. He is my friend”, Mabutho introduces.

“Oh, sawubona(Hello)”

“It's nice to meet you. I....”, He makes a suggestion with his body that Mabutho understands.

“She is my step mother”, Mabutho says.

“Step mother? Your father is busy”, they laugh it out.

I keep quiet while they keep on talking.

“Follow me inside”,we follow after him going to the inside. A woman appears out of nowhere. She is beautiful.

“Mabutho Ntuli, I didn't think you would make it”

“I wouldn't have but I changed my mind”,he says.

The woman comes towards us and hugs him and looks at me with a smile.

“This is Busisile”

“Hello, my name is Lethu. I am married to this man”,she points to the Nkanyezi guy.

“Nice to meet you sisi”

“No, call me Lethu”,she smiles then hugs me.

After breaking the hug she turns to her husband.

“I have the baskets. We should go”,she says and walks off and her husband follows.

We do the same and we are lead outside and there is are carts waiting for us.

“Come”,Mabutho says to me and we get to the other cart.

It starts moving and we follow the other cart behind. It is not long before we reach a field and then we hope out of the carts. Is this how meetings go like?

“We harvested new strawberries and they are big and juicy. Can not not have them”,The Lethu lady says.

She hands the baskets to us.

“Pick out as many as you like, come Busisile”,she says and I go with her.

We start disappearing into the strawberries Field and I am fascinated. I have never been to one.

“This looks lovely”,I say.

”It is lovely. So Mabutho and you”,she says and I look at her as she picks out the first bunch.

“We are?”

“What are you to each other?”,she asks.

“I am married to his father”,she seems astonished.

“His father? How old are you if you don't mind me asking?”,she says.

“I am 21 years”,you couldn't hide the shock on her face.

“I don't know what to say”

I keep quiet. I pick out some strawberries.

“So, how did you marry his dad?”

“He picked me out to be his wife at the reed dance”

“Oh my gosh. How do you feel about that?” ,it's tough but...

“He is not a bad man”,I say.

“Mmmh”,we carry on picking out the strawberries. After some time she tells me that she is going to get new baskets so she takes my full one and calls for her husband to accompany her.

I carry on picking out some strawberries and eat them that moment. I think I will be full when I leave this place.

“They taste great right?” ,I turn around and it's Mabutho.

“Yes, they are very nice”,I smile.

He comes closer and picks out the most ripe one and gives me one.

“Thank you”

“Taste it”,I do as I am told and I love it.

“It is nice”

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I say

“Can I?” ,I nod and give it to him and he takes it and eats it.

“It does”,I nod my head.

He stares at me and I look away from his gaze.

“You look beautiful today Ncane”,he says.

“Thank you”

“I should buy you more of these clothes or take you shopping tomorrow”,he says

“It won't be necessary”

“I insist”,I nod.

“Ngiyabonga. Kwande kuwe Mphembe(Thank you, more blessings to you Mphembe)”,I say.

“Now calling me Mphembe makes me feel like I am my father's age”,I giggle.

“So as calling me Ncane makes me feel like I am 60 when you are older than me”

“I am huh?”,I nod.

“Let me reintroduce myself then. I am Mabutho Ntuli”,he takes out his hand.

“Busisile Sibisi”,I say and we shake hands.

His grip doesn't loosen after some time instead he looks at me.

“You are beautiful Mabusi”,he says.

“Mabusi?”

“Yes”, I shake my head.

“I will call you that from now on”, he chuckles.

“Okay”, it's better than Ncane at my age and his.

“Can I hug you please?”, he doesn't wait for my response before he pulls me to his body and wraps his arms around mine. It feels so nice to get a hug without a potbelly on the way of that.

He heaves a sigh after that.

MANDISA

Gugulethu invited Mabutho and I to their strawberry farm. I met Lethu through Mabutho because he is friends with Nkanyezi. I know Nkanyezi from Varsity since then we have all been friends. I work in my father's company. It is a logistics company and I am his P.A. I do have a qualification but I don't see myself working for someone else than my father. I get paid way more than usual Personal assistants get paid. I couldn't make it to their invitation so I guess Mabutho will go alone. I know he sometimes contemplates with going or not when I am not there. He doesn't want to arrive alone and feels like Lethu needs some female to talk to. I wish to marry Mabutho one day

and he has been talking about Amalobolo lately so I am hoping he is hinting that he will pop the question very soon. I love my Farm boy very much.

BUSISILE

we picked out two baskets full off the strawberries and it was now getting to lunch so we had to leave the strawberry farm and go back to their house. I don't know if it is a choice to live where your farm is situated or anything of that sort but I guess so. We got to their lovely house and I can't stop thinking about the hug that Mabutho gave me. It felt nice, I won't lie. I enjoyed that hug. Now lunch is being served and the conversation is flowing quiet well between everyone here as they know each other well. I respond when I am spoken to but besides that they carry on talking.

“I hope Busi Enjoyed herself”,Lethu says.

They all look at me.

“I did, thank you”,Lethu smiles.

We carry on eating and the conversation keeps on flowing between all of them.

Its another day not going to the stable and seemingly I am a bit disappointed but Mabutho told me that I should get ready because he is taking me to town. I need to go to town and get Somethings that I need with the money that Mphembe gave to me. MaThabethe called this morning just to check how I am so far and I told her that I am adjusting well in this place. I really am enjoying being here. It's away from those wives and their comments about my age being the same age as their children or being a few years younger than their oldest children.

I did my doek nicely on my hair. It do reveal some of my hair and I ran my fingers on my skirt and looked at myself on the mirror. A knock comes from the door and I turn and go to open the door. Mabutho is standing there all dressed up casually. This man, just like his mother he looks perfect.

“Good morning”

“Morning”, I keep my silence.

“Are you ready?”

“Yes, let me grab my bag”, he nods and I go and grab it.

I follow after him and he stands by the passage wall as I get out of the bedroom.

“I love your hair”, I smile.

“Thank you”, he nods and we ascend down the stairs.

We get to the outside and he opens the door for me again. I get inside and thank him. His phone rings before he closes the door and he stands outside for a while talking to the person who is on the phone. After some time he hangs up and goes around to his side and gets inside starting the car and we soon leave.

*

We got to a shopping centre as it stated. I have never been in such a place and I am quiet excited. Even to be sharing the same space with white people it feels amazing. Like I am in another world.

“We should start with clothes”,Mabutho says.

I stop him.

“I don't need new clothes. I just need toiletries. I have clothes”,he looks at me.

“For you to work in”,he says.

“I am fine with what I have thank you”,he sighs.

“Mabusi, ngiyakucela ungabi nenkani (Please don't be stubborn)”,he says.

I sigh.

“Okay, we can get small stuff”,he smiles.

“It is okay, we can get small stuff”, He leads us to a shop and we get inside. I don't even know where we would start if we had to start.

“You will enjoy this”, he seems excited.

I hope so. I really hope we get something comfortable.

Chapter 6

I feel like with the clothing buying we got more than enough clothes than what was needed. Even some that were out of the work attire as well. Mabutho went to pay for all of those clothes. I feel like this is way too much of generosity as well. I am standing by the store entrance when he pushes a trolley towards me and I stand there and look at him as I am biting my nails.

“We can go”, he says and we walk out of the store.

“This is too Much bhuti”

“Mabusi”, I sigh and close my eyes.

“Ngiyaxolisa(I am sorry)”

“Is there something else that you wanted to buy”

“Womem cosmetics”

“Let's go to Clicks for that”, he says.

“Is it not expensive to buy there. I can find what I want at Spar or Shoprite”, I say.

“You will find everything you need at Clicks.”, I sigh as we make our way there.

“Mabutho why don't you hate me?”, he looks at me.

“Hate you in which way Mama?”,The way he says it sounds nice.

I wipe the smile off my face quickly.

“What are you thinking about?”,he asks.

“Nothing”

“I don't hate you Mabusi. You being married to my father won't change. We are family but that doesn't mean we shouldn't get along because we also work together”,that is true.

“I thought that everyone hated me in the family”

“My mother taught us to not act on situations that we cannot change”,he says.

I nod my head. We head over to Clicks and we get inside the store.

“Lets grab everything you need”,he says and I nod.

We go and get what I need and I find also what I have been needing the most and those are pads.

“The prices here are high”,I say.

“Don't worry about the prices. I will pay”,he says.

“I can't let you”

“Mabusi”,He warns and I sigh.

“Kodwa Mabutho(But Mabutho)”

“No buts...”

This man unenkani(He is stubborn). We make our way to the paying area and we stand in line.

“So my father huh?”,I look at him.

“He is what?”,I look at him.

“What do you like about him?”,he asks with a curious face.

“Uhm he is himself I guess”,I say.

“Mmmh”, I keep quiet.

“So me”,I turn to him.

“What about you?”,he asks.

“What...what do you think about me?”,I look at him.

Well he is clean and neat, he smells nice. Very nice from yesterday I would say I couldn't get his scent off the tip of my nostrils. He is handsome. Perfect like his mother and generous.

“You are yourself”,I settle for that.

I can't say all these complements to my step son.

“Ohw I see”,I look away from him.

I let out a little sigh.

“Next!”, we move to go to the paying station and he loads everything that we took.

We greet the lady who is helping us pay and then the price comes back. Oh lord shoot me.

“That is R500”

“We didn't take alot of things”

Mabutho takes out his card.

“We did take alot of things Mama. Or should I say I did”,I give him a look.

“For what reason?”

“You will need it”

“Those bathing soaps are unnecessary”

“They will help you relax after a long day”,he says and I huff.

He pays and then places his cards back in his wallet. He leans by my ear and whispers in it.

“You can try them tonight and you will see how nice they feel on your skin”,I felt shivers go down my spine as his warm breath hits my neck.

“Mmmh”

We get everything we bought and thank the lady then we walk out of the store.

“Lets go and get some burgers”, I look down.

“I have never had a burger before”,he looks at me.

“Well mam let me introduce you to the best food in the world”,he says.

“Okudlula ubatata? Cha ngiyala(Surpassing sweet potatoes? I refuse)”,I love sweet potatoes.

“Yes ”

I shake my head.

“Lets see if this burger of yours is impressive or not”,he chuckles.

“Ms Mabusi are you challenging my food?”

“I am just saying I want to be impressed by it”

“Then prepared to be. Let's go and unload all of this in the car and go to a drive thru”

“Okay”,I don't know what that is but let's see.

We walk out of the mall and we go to his car. He unloads everything at the boot and then he comes and opens the door for me and I get inside thanking him. That is nice of him. He goes to his side and gets inside then he starts the car and off

we go to the Drive thru that he is talking about. He bobbles his head back and forth for a moment as the music comes on. He sings softly to it, well he seems a bit happy for this burger.

We get to a place called Mc Donald's and he orders burgers for us. Honestly I am quest excited to taste whatever that Mabutho has instore for me. We get what he wants and then as quickly as that the burgers are on our laps. He drives to the parking lot and takes our the food for us from the brown paper bag and put it's at the back and he hands the burger to me and takes his.

“I hope you are impressed”

“It smells nice”,he smiles.

“Well enjoy”,I nod and open the package and then I take the burger out. I hold it as I can possibly can and then I take a bite.

I close my eyes and moan to the taste that I am feeling on my tongue. It tastes so good.

“You like it?”,I nod my head and throw it back. This tastes so amazing.

“I told you”,he chuckles.

I open my eyes and look at him and finish up chewing.

“Where has this been all my life?”,he chuckles.

“Welcome to my World Mabusi”

“Your world tastes nice”,he chuckles and then he moves his thumb to my cheek and wipes away something and licks his thumb.

“You had some sauce on your...cheek”,he says.

“Oh, thank you”,I shy away.

He clears his throat and goes onto biting his burger and I carry on eating mine. We eat in silence for a moment and he looks at me.

“I am thinking of getting married next year”,he says out of the blue.

“To sis Mandisa?”he nods and I smile.

“That is wonderful. I am sure your father will be happy so as your mother”

“And you?”

“I will be happy for you as well”,I take a bite off my burger.

He puts his burger away and pulls me in for a hug and kisses my forehead.

“I am sorry but... I can't help myself”,he heaves a sigh and holds me tightly.

“Are you okay?”

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I ask as I inhale his nice perfume.

“I am now”,I sigh.

I like his perfume alot. I really do.

I am so glad to be back at working at the stable today. I would say I also missed some of Sbu's jokes. Well today Mabutho left early to go wherever he is going and I am sure Mandisa is coming in today. Yesterday he bought another burger for me since I liked it and I hope it won't be my newly obsessed food that I will like very much.

“Hello Sbu”,I say while walking into the stable all newly dressed up in my new clothes.

He gets up from kneeling and he dusts his hands off.

“Awu shwele! Waze wamuhle Nkosazane(You look beautiful Princess)”,I smile.

“Ngiyabonga(Thank you)”,He whistles.

“Ngicela ukuziletha Zonke zigcwele futhi zidlula ezomyeni wakho (Can I please steal you from your husband?)”,I giggle.

“Kodwa Bhuti Sbu”,I shake my head.

“You are showing your true beauty”,I smile.

Well usually women in my village are seen more beautiful if they are thicker and have more meat of which I don't have. I have always been insecure about how I look but living here is boosting that up a bit.

“Lets get onto work”

“Sure”,he nods.

“I am going to deliver some milk to the near by areas. Will you come with me?”,he asks.

“Ofacuse I would love to!”,he smiles.

“Perfect then. Let's get to work”,I nod.

I get my usual bucket and I get to milking the cow. It took so long but I was in a very good lord today. Maybe it also has to do with a newly found scent that I like. I can't get it out of the tip of my nose. After some time I get done and Sbu takes the bucket for me and I follow after him. We go to the cart and we get inside. He then drives off carefully until we reach the main house and he gets the bucket out and places it outside and dusts his hands.

“Let me get the sealed bottles then we can leave”,he says and I nod waiting for him.

He goes and gets what he needs and he comes back with another guy carrying freshly squeezed milk. They go and load it

in the van and before we know it they are done. We get to leave very quickly. I also go to the van and get inside so as Sbu and he drives out.

I love my new job shame. Yes I don't do much but I love this learning experience that I get. I am glad that Mphembe allowed for me to be here and I will forever be grateful for that.

“Sbu where is home for you?”, I ask him.

“I come from UMhlabu uyalingana”, He chuckles.

“Oh I know where that is”

He nods.

“Yes, I am from there.”, I nod my head and keep my silence for that short period. He plays some music and I listen to it while nibbling my head a bit back and forth.

“Ntokazi, don't let the city consume you”, he says and looks at me.

“Consume me how?”

“Everything may look beautiful but it may not be good for you”, he says.

“Oh, ngiyakuzwa bhuti(I hear you)”

He nods his head.

“We are almost there”,he says in reference to where we are going. I nod my head. With some time on the road we get to another place that looks like a shop.

Sbu parks the van and then he hops out of the car and goes out to the back and offloads the first crate.

“Can I help?”,I ask him.

“No it's is fine”he says and I nod.

He goes inside the shop and when he comes out he comes out with a few men and they come and help him offload the other crates and they get done quickly. After he was done he gets inside the van.

“They buy the milk that is fresh?”

“Yes, they process it on their own”,I nod.

“Mmmh”

“Lets go”,I nod as he starts the car.

I guess it was just nice to get out and go onto the road. I look outside the window as the car moves and within some time we get back to the farm. We see Bhuti Mabutho's car parked up front. That means that he is back from wherever he went to. We hopped out of the car with Sbu.

“Bye Bhuti Sbu”,I say when I hop out of the car.

“Go well Ntokazi”, I smile and close the door walking off to the main house.

I get inside and take off my shoes and put them aside and then move from the front door.

“Boo!”, I jump in fright at that and he picks me up as I am trying to reset my heart from being frightened.

“Mabutho cisha wangimisa inhliziyo(You almost gave me a heart attack)”, he laughs.

“I am sorry Mabusi”, he says.

He lifts me up and down.

“You are light”, I hit his shoulder.

“Put me down. I know I am small”

“Okay”, he spins me around first.

“Mabutho!”, he puts me down and I feel a bit dizzy.

“Why are you this hyper active today?”, I ask while holding my head and go to sit on the couch.

“I just secured a big deal today with the dairy sector”

“Oh, well done! If there was a chicken here I would've slaughtered one for you”, he chuckles.

“Thank you Mabusi, I appreciate the thought”

“You really don't have chickens?” ,I ask.

“I do. I don't eat them though” ,I nod.

“Okay” ,he sits on the couch next to me.

“I was thinking about you” ,he says while looking at me.

“Thinking about me?” ,he nods.

“You are beautiful Mabusi” ,he says and I shy away.

“Thank you” ,he comes closer to me and I close my eyes as he kisses my forehead.

“Can I have a hug?” ,He asks politely.

I give him one and he holds me in his arms. I love his scent.

“You always smell nice” ,I say.

“You like it?” ,I nod slowly.

“It's nice”

“Thank you MaSibisi” ,he brushes my back softly that moment.

I am enjoying this. It's comforting.

CHAPTER 7

“waze wanona wamuhle boh!(You look thick and beautiful)”,it's MaThabethe.

She hops out of the car and comes towards me as we are standing by the door waiting for her to come forth followed by one of her sons. She comes and hugs me and I sink in her arms.

“I missed you shame!”,she says.

“I did as well, how are things at home?”,I ask.

“Hayi same old. You are not really missing out. I hope Mabutho is treating you well. I didn't raise him to not treat people well”,We break the hug and MaThabethe looks at her son intensely.

“I have been behaving mah”,Mabutho says behind me.

“Good then. I am here for only two days”,She says and walks inside.

Mabutho's brother greets and so do I and we walk inside the house. Mandisa came last night and left yesterday as well. She left no pleased at all, I wonder what happened but it is non of my business. I have been living here at the farm for over a month now and I must say I am enjoying it quiet well. We help

with the birth of a Calf and I was so excited to be part of the people who assisted in giving life in this place. Honestly I don't even want to leave.

MaThabethe looks around the house.

“It even looks more clean. Kuyasho kukhona umuntu wesifazane(It says that there is a woman)”, MaThabethe says.

“It is always clean mah”,Mabutho says.

“Yes but not this clean.”,She says and throws her body on the couch.

“I am tired being a wife is tiring”,She says.

“Let me make some tea for you”,I offer.

“Thank you MaSibisi”,I smile and make my way to the kitchen leaving her with her sons.

I get some baked treats that Mabutho bought yesterday and some juice from the fridge and then go and open the kettle to make some tea.

I prepare for his brother and I hear some chatter and laughter from the living room. When I am done I take the tray to the living room and serve Mabutho's brother. I never really caught his name. Mphembe literally has 29 children. How will I remember all 29 children's names ?

“Thank you sisi”,he says.

“Yebo Bhuti”

I go back to the kitchen and make some tea for MaThabethe and look outside the window and watch as the grass is being cut outside the house. I feel someone's presence behind me and a hand rests on my waist and I freeze a bit.

“What are we looking at?”,he whispers.

“The grass being cut”

“Is it satisfying?”,he whispers again.

“Maybe”,I turn around and look up to him.

“Do you need anything?”,I ask.

“Yes”,I wait for him to answer me but he doesn't.

“Mabutho what is taking so long!", MaThabethe asks.

“I am coming mah”,he says and he just quickly perks my forehead and goes to take some bottled water from the fridge and leaves the kitchen.

He does this everytime it has became a frequent thing of him to randomly kiss my forehead. I don't get it, why is he doing that? Is it even appropriate to even do so? I sigh and move from watching the outside show and get on with the tea. Once I am

done and I get the baked treats and put them on the tray and then I go and deliver them to MaThabethe.

“Noma Lingashisa kangakanani limnandi itiyi. Ngiyabonga MaSibisi (No matter how hot it is, tea is nice. Thank you MaSibisi)”, I smile and sit down.

She takes a sip of her tea and put some sugar inside and stirs it before she takes a sip once again.

“How are you finding this place?”, she looks at me.

“I think we should leave you guys for a moment”, Mabutho says and they leave with his brother.

“I am loving it Mah! Thank you, it's lovely and having to see these animals is something else”

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I say.

“Your eyes are even lighting up”, she chuckles.

“I am happy that you love it”, I smile.

We sit a bit chatting and catching up with also how everyone has been back home. A part of me misses it a little but another part of me doesn't. I will see them when I see them. I am just happy to away from the drama that MaThabethe has mentioned.

MABUTHO

I am with my brother Bongani outside for a moment just to catch up. We always exchange on who is taking mom where. If maybe she is going to one of their houses I am one of the people who fetch her from home and take her there. I stay for one day and then I leave and will fetch her when she is ready to leave but since my mother is leaving in two days I guess Bongani is also leaving in two days. I am the youngest out of all my brother's from my mother's womb but not necessarily the youngest in my father's children. There are a lot of them that follow after me.

We are just seated outside on the garden that is at the backyard and the sun is nicely up and blazing. It is not as bad as a month ago surely showing that winter is approaching quiet sooner than we thought.

“Kunjani ukuhlala noMamncane?(How is it living with Mamncane?)”, he asks.

I sigh.

“Kunzima bafo(It's hard)”, he frowns and looks at me.

“Mom said we should be nice to her. Is she nice?”, he asks.

“She is okay. She is nice ”

“What is the problem?”, he asks. I sigh and close my eyes.

“Ngiyamthanda Bafo, ngithi ngiyayiziba lento kodwa ingihlupha kakhulu kunakuqala (I love her, I have been trying to ignore it but it bothers me more)”

He is in utter shock for a moment.

“She may be young but she is married to ubaba. What do you say about that Mabutho? Don't you have Mandisa?”, I look down and sigh.

“I know all of that and Yes Mandisa is still present. It's just I don't know how to explain what I feel towards our step mother”, he laughs.

“This, this is just too funny not to laugh at. I can't believe this”, He carries on laughing.

“This is serious. I need some advice”, I say.

“You asked the wrong person. A part of me says go for it if it is worth it and another part of me says that leave her alone because she is with baba. Not legally but still would he agree to let his prized possession go?”

“She is not an object”

“I hear you but Baba Adores her and Mom. I mean she asked to be here and he allowed it. He wouldn't have with the other wives. He has a soft spot for her”, he says.

“I do too”

“Weh Shwele! good luck with everything. Iyobona phambili(We will see it)”,he says.

I sigh. I feel like burying myself at the moment just so I can think things through properly but I know what I am feeling for Mabusi. It's there and I like it. I don't think I have felt like this around any woman before. I know love but this...this is what I have never felt and it's not just Loving her.

BUSISILE

We chatted for over two hours with MaThabethe before I went to the kitchen to dish up for everyone. I cooked earlier and Mabutho put it in a warmer just so it could stay warm for me. I needed him to help me get it out of there so I could dish up for everyone. I made my way to where they are with his brother outside and I stood a distance and bowed my head In respect.

“Ngiyaxolisa ukuniphazamisa(I am sorry to disturb you)”,I say.

“No it is okay”

“Bhuti Mabutho can you please help me with the warmer thing. I would like to dish up for everyone”,I say.

“Oh okay. I am coming”

“Thank you”, I turn around and walk off to the kitchen.

I get in there and MaThabethe is making small chatter from where she is. I guess she needed to rest since she is here she

hasn't moved from that couch and I don't think she will anytime soon. I take out the glasses and start to rinse them for the juice and then Mabutho walks in the kitchen that very moment to help with the warmer.

He gets everything for me and when he is done he turns to me and I look at him.

“Thank you”, I say

“Anyday, do you need more help?”, I shake my head.

“No, a man is not supposed to be in the kitchen”, I say

“Who came up with that?”, he chuckles.

“It is supposed to be like that”

“Mmmmh. Let me leave you to it then”, he walks out of the kitchen.

I stand there for a moment as I watch him walk out and then move to dishing up for MaThabethe. I have to go and prepare the room she will sleep in as well so as for Mabutho's brother. I don't remember his name and I have to. It would be rude or I could just refer to him to his clan name. Yes that is the safest option.

As I am dishing up. My mind jots back to the time I was still living at home.

_____Flash back_____

“Intombi iyaguqa ngedolo ipheke emlilweni(A girl goes on her knees and cooks by the fire)”,My mother said behind me as the fire was burning as I am cooking.

She comes and looks over my pot as I am making some pap.

“Bonda Busisile Bonda!(Stir Busisile stir!)”,I stir more as my arm was feeling a bit tired.

But I couldn't be tired as yet until she is satisfied.

I held the metal handle of the pot and let it burn me just so I could hold the pot in place. It wasn't as painful as it was the first time. I am used to the pot burning me that I don't feel any pain anymore.

“Yeah ushaya khona ke manje(Yes. You are doing well now)”,She says.

I keep on stirring the pot.

I finish dishing up and I make my way to go and serve them.

Chapter 8

It's night time and MaThabethe is in the bathroom getting ready for her rest. I have prepared Mabutho's brother's room where he will rest and also MaThabethe's room where she will rest. I am still fluffing her pillows for some comfort. She comes into the bedroom as I am placing the pillows on the bed.

“Hawu uselapha?(You are still here?)”,She asks.

“Bebgilungisa nje imicamelo(I was fixing the pillows)”,I say as I run my fingers on them.

“You didn't have to. I could've done it on my own

“I want you to rest Mah. I know how it can be back home”,I say and she opens the bed.

“Ey Ngoba uyazi kodwa angifuni ukuk'gqilaza(I don't want to slave you)”,I smile.

“You are not. Let me leave you to rest. ”,I say moving towards the door.

“Good night sisi

“Good night Mah”,I open the door and walk out.

I have washed the dishes so what is left for me now it is to switch off the lights and make my way to my room so that I can rest. I go downstairs and I switch off the lights. I turn and bump into someone.

“Ouch”, I quickly open the lights.

“Ngiyaxolisa(I am sorry)”, I say.

It was Mabutho. I thought he is in bed right now as he said he is going to rest early.

“Kulungile. Ungakhathazeki(It's okay. Don't worry)”, he says.

I nod.

“You need something?”, I ask.

“I don't have any sleep...”, I nod my head.

“Let me leave you to whatever you will be doing”, I share a smile at him.

I move away from him but he calls out for my name.

“Can we go for a drive?”, he asks.

“Ebusku?(At night?)

“Yebo, kuyasiza emoyeni(Yes, it helps with your soul)

“I have never heard of that before”, he chuckles.

“Its what City people do”, he says.

“But what will your mother say when she doesn't find us here?”

“Don't worry. Please. We will be back”

I sigh and look at him.

“Okay”, he goes and grabs his car keys.

“I need to wear my shoes.”, I say.

“Don't worry. You won't need them”, he picks me up.

“Mabutho”, he goes towards the door and opens it.

We go out with me in his arms and get to his car under the shelter. He unlocks it and the lights flicker and he opens the passenger door for me and places me inside and goes to the other side and gets inside. He starts the car and helps me put on the seat belt. I have never went out at night so I wonder what will happen.

He drives out of the farm and it is silent on the road and dark but the car lights up the way. He plays some soothing music and it's quiet enjoyable. He then steals a glance at me as he is driving.

“Mabusi”, he says and I look at him.

“Mabutho”, he heaves a sigh and holds onto the steering wheel of the car a bit firmly.

“Ngiyakuthanda. Ngizwa ngikuthanda Kakhulu(I love you, I feel like I love you. Very much)”,he says.

I am in a state of shock.

“Ungithanda kanjani?(Love me how?)”,I ask.

“Njengoba ubaba ethanda Wena nami ngikuthanda kanjalo kodwa kakhulu(Just like my dad loves you, I love you like that but more)”,he says

I don't know what to say. I am trying to wrap my head around what he is saying.

“Mabutho Ufana nendodana Yami(Mabutho you are like my son)”,yes I might be younger than him but he is still my husband's son and that makes me his mother right

He slows down the car until it stops and he turns off the ignition.

“Mabusi please look at me”,I look at him as he faces me.

“Ngiyakuthanda. I have been trying to fight it kodwa cha angikwazi. Ngiyakufuna mama(But no I can't. I want you Mama)”,he says and my heart skips a beat.

“Mabutho”,I softly say. Rather speechless more than anything.

“I know you are married to my father. I know that you are a woman of morals but please give me a chance. Us while we are here.

“I can't cheat on my husband Mabutho. With you especially ngeke ngikwazi(I can't)”,He sighs and closes his eyes.

“Okay”,he opens his eyes and looks at me.

“I will give you a moment”,he says and then undo his belt and gets out of the car.

Where is he going? He walks further from the car. I sigh as my heart is beating very fast. I have never expected this at all. I thought he was being nice just because we are family but I guess not then. I sat there for some time while the radio was playing some music. I was waiting for him to come back inside the car so we could leave and go back but he wasn't coming. He was still stationary in one position. I closed my eyes for a moment before I breathed in and out and opened the car door and got out of the car and made my way towards him and stood behind him.

“Mabutho”,I call out for him.

He turns to me.

“Why are you walking on your feet?”,he asks as he comes towards me.

"I wanted to come to you", he picks me up once again in his arms.

"Ngiyaxolisa(I am sorry)", I say.

"Why are you sorry?", He places me on the car bonnet.

"Its just that I am scared. I have never been with any man before. Your father would've been my first one. I don't want to being shame to my family and yours as well. Also Mandisa. She is in your life and we shouldn't causing pain and disappointment to those people. I will receive the bad end of it more than you"

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He holds my face and gives me a light perk and I close my eyes for a moment and open them to find him looking at me.

"I want us to take that risk. I want you Mabusu if you want me as well. I want to give you love and be the only person I love", I don't know why but hearing that warmed my heart for a second.

"Okay", I say.

"Okay?You are agreeing to this?", I sigh a bit hesitant but eventually I nod.

"Yes", He smiles as I say that.

“Ngiyabonga MaSibisi ngeke uzisole(Thank you MaSibisi. You won't regret it)",I hope I don't.

“Are we going back home now?",I ask.

“I want us to stay here for some time. I want to hold you in my arms”,he says.

“Uhm okay”,he gets me off the bonnet and goes to the back of his car and opens there and places me on the back seats.

He gets inside and closes the door and pulls me to him. He smells so amazing. I have mentioned before that I love the way he smells. It feels warm to be in his arms.

“I love you MaSibisi”,I smile and close my eyes for a moment.

I woke up to the sound of chickens clucking from afar and I opened my eyes to find myself in a room that I am not familiar with. I look around and I am in a top that I don't know. I sit up and smell it then it hits me that it smells like Mabutho. I don't remember being here. All I remember was being in his arms when we were in the car. I got off the bed and saw my dress on the little couch in his room and I went towards it. This must be his room. I have never been inside of it so I don't know how it really looked like until now. I take my dress and then I see a bunch of flowers on the dressing table and I go there. There is a card and I take it and open it inside as I am curious.

“To MaSibisi. Ngithanda ukubonga ngokunginika inhliziyo yakho enhle ukuthi ngiyinakekele. Ngiyakuthanda futhi ngiyethembisa ukuk'thanda ngendlela efanele. Mabutho(I would love to thank you for giving me your beautiful heart for me to look after. I love you and I promise to love you the way you should be loved. Mabutho)”,I found myself smiling as I look at the letter and take the flowers and hold them close to my body. I stand there for a moment admiring them before I rush out of his room leaving and going to mine. I close the door and breathe out as I was not caught.

I lay my body on the bed and smile once again. I think I like him. Yes I do like him. No man has bought flowers for me before. As I am thinking about yesterday's events my phone rings and I get up from the bed and take it. It's Mphembe. I answer the call.

“Baba, Ninjani?(Baba how are you?)”,I ask.

“I am well Mamncane. Ngabe usekahle ninoMathabethe Lapho?(Are you well with MaThabethe there?)”,He asks.

“Yes we are well

“That is good. I miss you here at home. When is Mabutho bringing you back ?

“I don't know. I will ask him”,I say.

“You should come back. We need to make some children. I am not getting any young” he says and my heart skips a beat.

“Yebo baba

”Kuhleke,Ngizophinde nginithinte ntambama(Good, I will call in the afternoon)

“Okay

“Bye”,I say my good byes and we hang up.

I feel like smashing my phone. This just put my mood down. I just can't imagine myself sleeping with Mphembe. He doesn't smells as nice as Mabutho does and he is old. Very old for me. I will feel like I am sleeping with my own father. I sigh and close my eyes. I hope I don't go home early until I can be able to face the fact of sleeping with Mphembe.

I get up from the bed after some time and I go and take a bath. After I was done I got dressed and I then folded Mabutho's top nicely and put it in my drawer then cloed it. I walked out of my room and made my way downstairs. I found MaThabethe busy in the kitchen.

“Awu Wavuka Ntombi(You are up)”,MaThabethe says as she is dishing up some porridge.

“I am sorry for waking up this late”,I say

“It is okay. You need to rest, I am sure Mabutho is overworking you here”,she says with a smile.

I still can't get over how beautiful this woman is.

“Thank you mah

“They are outside. You can go and join them. I will bring the food

“Can I not help you?”,I ask.

“No. I will do this on my own. Wena go and sit with the others”, I sigh and nod as I make my way out of the kitchen going outside.

There he is seated with his brother and Sbu as well. They are chatting away.

“Awu Ntokazi, how are you?”,Sbu greets.

“I am well Sbu, how are you?”,I smile.

“I am always happy to see you”,he says.

Mabutho gets off his Chair and pulls one that is next to him and I look down shyly as I sit down and thank him. He sits back next to me.

“I am Bongani by the way MaSibisi”, Mabutho's brother says.

“I am glad to meet you once again”,I say.

He nods and we keep on speaking. Mabutho would casually run his fingers on my lap as he is talking to others or hold my hand from time to time and let it go then go back to it. His mother came in with the food and we helped her place everything down and thanked her for that. She joins us and we start with eating.

"I have an event to attend today and I would like MaSibisi to accompany me" Mabutho says out of the blue.

"What about Sisi Mandisa?", Sbu asks.

"She is busy", Mabutho dismisses the issue and I look down.

"You will see nice looking boys there Busisile" Mathabethe says.

"Mah", Mabutho looks at his mother as he says that.

"Hawu she is young. She needs to see good looking things once in a while

"Like me", Sbu says and we laugh.

"Yes Sbusiso

"Mmmh" Mabutho says.

We carry on with eating. I wonder what happens to these event thingies. I am yet to see what really happens.

"Shouldn't Busisile go and do her hair and get a dress and all of that?" MaThabethe asks.

“I have that taken care of mah”She nods and Mabutho looks at his wrist watch.

“I have to rush somewhere”,he says.

“Okay”,he stands up and goes off. We stay and carry on eating until we are done.

We collect the dishes and I go and wash them. I feel someone come behind me and kisses my neck softly. I knew who it was from the scent.

“Are you not leaving to rush somewhere?”

“I am but I couldn't leave without greeting you”,he says.

“Anyone could walk in”,I say and turn around to look at him.

“Thank you for the flowers.

“You liked them?”I nod.

He kisses my forehead.

“I am happy you like them Sthandwa sami

“You have to go now”,I say.

“Usuyangixosha?(are you chasing me away?)

“No I am not chasing you away”,I say

“Mmh okay I will go. I will see you”,I nod and he goes out leaving. I watch him disappear before I go back to doing the

dishes. I sigh as I think about things back home but I let it not ruin my mood any further

I would like to apologize for not posting any chapters these past few days. I have been busy an I couldn't get the time to write them but I do apologize.

I sigh as I think about things back home but I let it not ruin my mood any further.

Chapter 9

I went on to help around the farm with anything that I could help with as I get myself busy. Today I am not working with Sbu but somewhere else in the Chicken department this time around. I was the one collecting the eggs while they were eating into the baskets carefully. I took only a few and then left their nests.

“I collected quiet a lot”,I say to the one I am working with.

“It is okay. Tomorrow is still another day plus more eggs were collected earlier”,he says and smiles.

“Okay then”

“So how far are you with your studies?”,He asks and I look down.

“I am not studying anything. I just have Matric”,I say.

“Mmmh. Do you wish to?”he asks.

“Yes, but I have to ask someone in order for me to do so”,I say softly.

“Hopefully Mr Ntuli will help you like he did when I came here”,he says and moves making his way out of the coop.

“What did he do?”,I ask finding myself curious

“I had Matric too but he gave me a job here and did more than giving me a job. He made me study partime to further my education. Now I have a degrees that corresponds with what I do here. I could leave and get a better job but I love it here and the pay is very good as well”,he smiles.

“That is nice of him”

“He is nice but also not nice when you overstep on him.”,I nod my head.

“Bring those eggs here”,he says and I give the eggs up to him.

“How old are you?”

“I am 29 years old”,I nod my head.

“I have to go, thank you for teaching me today”

“Anytime Mabusi”,I narrow my eyes and nod before walking away.

I bite my bottom lip as I am walking away in thoughts. Very deep thoughts and I sigh for a moment. I can't believe what I am about to do.

I make my way inside the house and find MaThabethe watching some TV drama and she turns around to me.

“Awu you are back”

“Yes, I need to wash my hands”,I quickly say.

“Yes you should. There is someone upstairs waiting for you. Apparently uthunye uMabutho ukuze akusize ulungisele lomcimbi eniya kuwo kusihlwa(sent by Mabutho o help you prepare for tonight's event that you guys are going to)”,She says.

“Oh, ngiyabonga(Thank you)",I say in confusion.

I go to the kitchen and wash my hands in the seperate sink and after I get done I make my way upstairs and try to find this person who is said to be upstairs. I get to my room and find my room transformed for a moment with mirrors and chairs and clothes around that are on a rails and everything is there that I don't know.

“Oh hello.”,This man turns around.

He is in pink shorts and dressed like a woman.

“Hello, may we help you?",he asks.

“What are you doing in my room?”,I ask.

“Are you Busisile?”

“Yes”

“Finally! We have been waiting. We have alot to do honey come”,he pulls me inside and sits me on the chair. The lady that is with him I assume comes closer.

“What are you here for?” ,I ask.

“To transform you into beauty. That's what we do” ,he says with much happiness inside.

“Ohw”

“I am going to enjoy transforming you honey boo“

I don't know what to expect from this but I have to trust that they won't do anything wrong to me right?

I was feeling tired as it has been hours since I have been sitting on this chair. My eyebrows plucked and my hair washed also everything was done to me. Some were painful things and I don't want to lie. I didn't enjoy those parts. I hated them honestly speaking and if I was to do them again it wouldn't be anytime soon. They blow dry my hair and they got me dressed in a beautiful dress. The shoes they made me wear were nice small baby heels as I can't wear heels. After that they started doing my face and doing my hair as well. This was the first time my hair was being done like this. I enjoyed that part. They got done after some time.

“Oh my God you are really beautiful!” ,The pink man said. That is what I will call him.

“Thank you”

“People at the event will be blown away”,I think that is a bit far fetched if you tell me.

“Thank you so much”

“Pleasure honey. My pockets are going to sleep happy today”,he says.

I don't know what he means but I guess his pockets will be happy somehow.

A knock comes on the door and they tell the person to come in. MaThabethe peaks her head inside and comes in after.

“Waze wamuhle boh! (you are so beautiful!)”,She exclaims and I look down shyly.

“Ngiyabonga Mah(Thank you Mah)”

“Come, time is running and Mabutho is ready to leave. I wanted to fetch you here”,she says

I thank the people who were helping me get prepared and MaThabethe took my hand and held it in hers and we made our way out of the bedroom. We were chatting as we made our way down the stairs until we got to the bottom.

“Mabutho!”,She calls out for him. His brother stands up from the couch.

“Wamuhle MaSibisi(You are beautiful MaSibisi)",Bongani says.

“Thank you”, I say and look away shyly.

“I am coming Mah”

“Time is running. You will be late”, MaThabethe says.

He walks in from the kitchen wearing a suit. He looks handsome, his mother made a good contribution making him. It is like he was crafted with time and God took his time crafting him into perfection.

“Wow!”, He says I guess absent minded because he clears his throat after.

“You look Nice MaSibisi”

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he says.

“Thank you”

He places the bottled water down and turns to me.

“We can go now”, he says.

“Yes go. You are late”, his mother emphasize that.

I breathe in and out before we make out of the house saying our goodbyes. Another car was waiting for us outside. He opened the back door and I was wondering why until I saw that there is someone seated in the front. He got in with me and

closed the door. His mother was waving outside and I waved back at her. She is such a nice woman.

“You look amazing Sthandwa sami”, he says and places his hand on my lap. I look at him.

“Thank you, you are also beautiful”, He smiles and shys away from my face.

“Thank you”, The car starts moving and he takes my hand into his and holds me.

“Ngiyakuthanda yezwa?(I love you okay?)”, I nod.

He smiles and I do the same. I am quite excited to know what the night has instore for us really.

“Mabutho”, I look at him.

“Mama”

“Can I ask you something?”, my heart is beating fast as I say that.

“Uhm you can”, he says.

I breathe in and out that moment.

“I would like to study in University. I really want to. I want to ask if you would allow me. Mphembe said I should not and work here and...”, he interrupts me.

“I will allow you”, he smiles.

“Really?” ,I am in disbelief.

“Yes. I will allow you. It's something you want and I could only support you Sthandwa sami. Plus my father wouldn't know since you live here with me now” ,he says.

“Oh Nkosi Yami ngiyabonga(Oh my God, thank you)” ,I hug him and he holds me in his arms.

“Anythung for you” ,I smile.

I feel so happy. I was scared of even bringing that up.

MANDISA

I knocked off quiet early today. Mainly because my father left early to be with his wife which meant that I can knock off early. I wanted to visit Mabutho but he told me his family is here so I could not visit since well I am no his wife but not yet. Soon I will be his wife. I really miss him I won't lie. I have soaked myself in the bathtub. It has been a hectic week already so I needed the time to relax. I close my eyes and sigh as I let my body relax before going to grab a glass of wine and I drink it up then place it back where it was. I play with water as I am laying there. I will have to ask Mabutho that I swing by his office in town so I could see my man. I really do miss him.

BUSISILE

We arrive at the event and the car comes to a stop and Mabutho hops out and comes to open the door for me. I thank him as he takes my hand into his and make our way inside the place. It looks beautiful and all the ladies here look amazing too. I Don't feel out of place with how I look. We go to a table and Mabutho greets a few people he knows there. He seems to know them well. We get seated that moment and he places his hand on my lap as we are seated.

“Tell me when you want to go home”,he whispers into my ear.

“I just need the bathroom to go and pee”,I whisper to him.

“Should I accompany you?”,I nod my head slowly.

I don't know these people so I don't want to be lost.

“Okay, Gentlemen I will be back in a moment”,Mabutho announces to the men around the table.

“Sure”

“Come”,he takes my hand and we stand up.

We make our way to the bathrooms I assume. He is guiding me through the way. We get to the bathrooms and he stands by the door.

“I will wait for you here”,he says.

I nod my head and make my way inside the women's bathroom. I sigh and went to go and pee. I did what I needed to do then I got up when I was done. I flushed and made my way out to wash my hands. I get done and look at myself through the mirror. Who knew I would look this nice one day? Mmmh. I made my way out of the bathroom and Mabutho was still where I left him.

“Thank you for waiting for me”

“I wouldn't leave you. Come”,he pulls me and we make our way away from the bathrooms. He leads the way to a open outside area that looks nice.

“Aren't we going back to where we were?”

“We will. I just want some time to look at you”,I shy away.

“Mmmh”

He goes behind me and wraps his arms around me and kisses my neck softly. I giggle a bit.

“You like that?”,he says into my ear.

“It feels, it makes my knees feel shakey”, I say.

“That is your weak spot”

“What is that?”

“A spot that I will use more often”, he says and kisses the weak spot once again.

“Mabutho”, I say as I start breathing a bit heavily.

“Mabusi”

“Mmmh”, I close my eyes.

“Are you okay?”, he asks.

“Yes I am”, he chuckles lightly.

“Lets go back inside. You will get more of this at home”, he says and I turn around to look at him.

“At home?”

“Will you sleep in my room tonight?”, he asks.

“Won't your mother know?”

“I promise I will be discrete. I will come to your room. I love having you in my arms”, I blush.

“Lets go back inside”, he nods and we made our way inside to the rest of the event.

The event was going so well I would say. I don't feel left out at all. Mabutho would give me attention just to make sure I am still okay and enjoying. It is nice going out and MaThabethe was right. There are good looking men I see here but it means nothing at all.

Chapter 10.

The event was wonderful. I won't lie but I was starting to get a bit tired and also I don't stay up until this late usually. Mabutho gave me his blazer to put on over my shoulders as I was feeling cold but now I am better. I watch him as he talks to the person beside him for a moment. I am just here thinking about Mphembe and also my family. I never thought I would marry a man as old as him. What is Mabutho doing with me? Why does he love me like he says he does or does he? What about Mandisa? Didn't he say that he wants to get married to her next year. Will she be his wife while I am married to his father and keep our relationship a secret. Yes it will be a secret if it happens that we really take this seriously.

He places his hand on my lap and turns to me and his touch snaps me out of my thoughts.

“Are you ready to go home?” ,he asks and I look into his eyes and nod before shying away.

“Yes”

“Okay, We can go” ,He stands up and says his goodbyes and I also do the same.

He leads the way out by holding my waist and we get out of the venue we were in. He leads me to the car and then opens the

back and helps me inside. I get inside and he closes the door and goes around the car and gets in also. He closes the door and the car starts to move. He holds my hand into his and looks at me.

“Did you enjoy yourself?” ,he asks.

“Yes I did”,he kisses the back of my hand and I feel flutters in my stomach.

“I will talk to someone I know about you going to University soon but we will speak about that tomorrow” ,he says.

“Are you serious?” ,I ask in utter disbelief.

“Yes Sthandwa sami. I am” ,I smile.

“Ngiyabonga kakhulu (Thank you so much)” ,he smiles.

The rest of the ride was just okay. We would speak here and there and he would mention some things about the farm. His phone rang and he took it out of his pants and he looked at the screen. I saw who it was and it was written “Mandisa”,I look away towards the outside of the window and the ringing stopped and then I felt his hand on my shoulder.

“Mabutho this is a difficult thing we are doing. We will be hurting alot of people here. Not only Your father, Mandisa, My family but also ourselves” ,I say.

“I will take care of everything Mabusi. Trust me”

“How?”

He is silent for a moment.

“For now I don't know but I will. I want you ”

“I am someone you are not supposed to have”,I say

“Mabusi don't say that”,he says.

“I am being honest”

He keeps quiet and I turn to face him and he looks at me.

“I won't hurt you. That is what I promise”,he seems sincere.

“Okay”

I sigh. This is tough, this is going to be a really hard thing to do and go about. What we are doing is something we are no supposed to be even doing or starting.

MABUTHO

Busisile rested her head on my shoulder when she was feeling sleepy. I made her do that so that she can have a support structure for her head. I feel like she has alot of things to get through at the moment. I understand her concerns about everything but one thing I will make sure is that I treat her well.

Mandisa called a few times but I didn't answer my calls for now. I will once I get home and have put Mabusi to rest. She shifts a bit and I look at her and make sure she is atleast in comfort. The driver drives inside the farm as the gate opens and closes behind the car as it drives in. I brush Mabusi's face gently as I look at her. The car finally comes to a stop and then the driver hops out and opens the door. She looks so peaceful and I don't want to wake her up. I gently get her on my lap and hold her in my arms and then get out of the car and the driver closes the door behind me. I make my way towards the house and I was able to open the door before walking inside. The lights were off for a moment. I was about to make my way up the stairs when someone spoke.

“How was the event?”,I look around I see Bongani seated while doing some work on his laptop.

“ It was good”,he looks at me.

“Mmmh”

“Let me put her to rest”

“Are you serious about that?”,he asks pointing at Mabusi who was still in my arms.

“Yes”,I say.

"I won't ask how or say anything but uzozibonela Wena(You will see for yourself)",he says and I look at him for a moment before going up the stairs.

I got upstairs and I went to my room and I got inside. I sighed and closes my eyes before laying her on her stomach and unzipping her dress from the back and going down. I took it off her and went to get my top and put it on her before placing her properly in bed. After that I went over to the balcony and I closed the sliding door and started calling Mandisa. It rang a few times before it got answered.

"Baby"

"Mandisa"

"I have been trying to call you"

"Yes, I know. I saw"

"What is going on lately. I miss you?",she says while sulking.

I sigh.

"Nothing",I say

"Oh okay. Can I swing by your work place tomorrow?",she asks.

"Yes sure. We need to talk"

"You are scaring me. Is it something bad?"

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she asks.

"In my view no it is not"

"Oh okay then. I am sleepy. Let me rest"

"Okay then bye"

"I love you", I sigh before hanging up.

I hold onto my phone for a moment and stay outside for a bit. I need some fresh air to think a little.

BUSISILE

I woke up in the morning. The sun hasn't been up as yet. I look around and I see Mabutho laying next to me. I sit up quickly from the bed. When did I get in here? I ask myself that question and then look around the room. His grip around my waist starts to tighten.

"You are awake", he says.

"How did I end up here?"

"You fell asleep Mama", he says.

"I did ?"

"Mmmh", I look at him and he still has his eyes closed.

"I have to leave", I quickly say.

“Don't for now. I love having you in my arms”,he says.

“Really?”,He nods his head.

“Mmh”

“I shouldn't stay for long. Your mother will be awake any second”,He pulls me to himself.

“I promise she won't see you”,He says and I start to ease up a bit and he pulls me to him as I lay back on the pillow.

“I am not sleepy anymore”,I say softly.

“You will watch me sleep then”,he smiles and I giggle.

“Mmmh”,I look at him as he sleeps.

The most thing I am grateful for is that no one saw me getting out of Mabutho's bedroom in the morning in his Tshirt from last night. I had showered and got dressed while he was getting ready to leave for the office. I made my way down the stairs when I was done and I found MaThabethe singing in the kitchen.

“Good morning mah”,I say

“Good morning my child. How are you?”

“I am well, yourself?”

“I am good. How was yesterday?”,she asks.

"I didn't understand a lot of things but it was nice", I say.

"Ubungeve umuhle izolo (You were so beautiful yesterday)", she says.

"Thank you", I blush.

"Where is Mabutho?", she asks.

I was about to answer when he entered the kitchen.

"Mah", he goes to greet his mother and sits on the high chair and winks at me. I blush while shying away.

"Morning. I have made some food. Come and eat", MaThabethe says.

"I will miss you", I say to her.

"Me too, I enjoyed being here for these past two days"

"Do visit phela ", she adds on and we share a light laugh.

"I will", I say softly.

I just don't want to have a child with Mphembe. If I go home now it means that and I won't work here. I don't know if I should tell Mabutho so he doesn't let me go. Maybe I should, I don't know.

Chapter 11

MaThabethe and Bongani left quiet earlier than I anticipated. Bongani had to go and do something and that required for MaThabethe to be dropped off early as he can't do it later. It was really sad to see her go. I really was sad and kind of wished that she could've stayed longer but I understand that she is a wife just like I am and has to go back home and take care of her husband even though he has many wives. I sometimes wished that we stayed here permanently and forever with no one disturbing us but be consumed in unexplainable happiness that we don't even know where it even comes from. Does that even make sense? Can you make any sense of what I had said? No? Yes? Okay anyway. Mabutho also left. He said he had to go and work in town and so I understood. Running such a big operation requires alot of work from him for it to succeed and from us as well as we are part of the team that is helping with how everything will operate.

This means I was left at the farm house alone. I cooked some food to keep myself busy after helping Sbu out. I want to do more but they don't let me do more work. They say they will take care of it and I just don't know why they don't let me work tirelessly like them. Anywho I was done with cooking and I was just washing some dishes in the kitchen when I heard the door

bell ringing. I frowned a bit but then thought it must be one of the workers. I wiped my hands and made my way towards the front door and then I opened it to meet Lethu. The last time I saw her was when we went to pick up strawberries on their farm.

“Hello”

“Hello, how are you?” ,she asks.

“I am well”, I reply.

“Mmmh,I came to see you”

“Me?” ,I ask shocked at what I have for her to come and see me.

“Come in”,I say and move out of the door and she walks in while walking proudly in her high heels. She looks sophisticated today.

“Please be seated. I will be back shortly”

“Sure”

She goes and sits down and I go to the kitchen and make some refreshments for her wondering what she is doing here and to see me for what? That was what was roaming in my head. Just after that when I was done making refreshments for her I went to the living room and served her the drinks.

"Thank you", I nod and sit down on the couch.

"I am sure you are asking yourself why am I here", I nod to her statement.

"I know we met once and are not the best of friends but I would love to get to know you. I really like your aura it possesses some calmness and I like it or Maybe am I reading things wrong?"

"How you feel about me is really how you feel about me", I say.

"Mmh I hear you. So I would like for us to try and be friends", she says.

I don't know. I have never really had many friends besides being friends with Dudu.

"I don't mind", she smiles.

"Thank you for giving me the opportunity. So how are things going?", she asks.

"They are going well"

"And Mabutho? How is he treating you?", she says with a big grin and I couldn't help but blush.

"Look at you"

"He is treating me okay", I say

“Just okay? Girl with that smile on your face I think he is doing some good treating”,she says.

“But I am married to his father. I shouldn't be smiling over my step son”,she takes a sip of her drink and places it down.

“You are young and I am sure you want to explore guys your age or guys close to your age and not old men who lived their lives. I am not judging but I am just saying. That man has a thing for you and he won't let it go until he has it with you. I know Mabutho through my husband and he is a determined person. I have seen him with another girl but the way he behaves around you it is like he is a teenager all over again”

“Don't you think I will be betraying my husband. That he will be betraying the girl he is with?”

“Yes I won't lie. It will be like that but of you guys are serious with each other then you will fix it”,I sigh.

“This is hard”

“Don't worry. That is what I am here for”,she smiles. I don't think I would pour my heart out like this.

MANDISA

I had just done with work and turned off my PC as it is lunch time. I told my father I am going to be back. I just needed to go

and see Mabutho. I have missed him so very much. My farm boy who didn't know what the City life had instore for him. I love Mabutho. Yes at first I was hesitant that he is a farm boy and I am a city girl but that didn't bother me anymore when I got to be his girlfriend for a while. I love the way he is. I just love him.

I swing by Nando's just so I can buy full chicken meal that we can eat together and when I get my meal I drive off to his offices in town to see him. Yesterday I was really missing him so much. I get to the offices with much time to spare. I park my car and I get out of the car with the food and then I lock the door and make my way towards the offices. I got the admin needed to be done when I got inside and then I made my way to Mabutho's office. Who would've thought that the farm boy I met in Varsity would be this big. I mean Mabutho loves his agricultural life very much. It is like he breathes it only. I knock on his office door and I hear a come in. I find him on call with a little smirk on his face.

"Mmh ngiyabula ukuzwa lokho.(I am so happy to hear that)",he says.

Damn I have really missed him. I make my way inside and place the food on his table.

"I will buy it. I won't forget",he says and chuckles while swinging on a chair.

“Okay, bye”,he hangs up and looks up to me and I go around his desk and give him a kiss in the lips.

“I have missed you so much”,I say. I really did.

“I did as well”

“You have been busy I see”,I say moving away from him and I go to prepare our lunch.

“Things have been hectic. Trucks have been delayed on the road in delivering the milk supply”

“They are delayed by what?”

“That is what I have been trying to find out”

“Don't worry. Everything will be okay”

“Hopefully”,he says and his phone rings.

“We are spending time”,I say while giving him a look.

“I will be back in just a second”,he says and I huff before he stands up and goes out of the office.

I stay there and start eating the lunch whole waiting for him.

MABUTHO

“Mama”,I say while answering my call.

“Baba”,I chuckle as he voice echo's through my phone speaker.

“Did you forget something?”,I ask.

“Yes

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I did”

“And that is?”,I ask with a grin wide across my face.

“When you coming back home please pick me up at Lethu's house",she says softly.

“How did you get there?",I ask with a frown.

“Lethu was here so we both left together”

“Mmh”,I bury one hand inside my pocket.

“Okay, I will fetch you when I get off”

“Thank you Ntuli”,I feel tingles go through my body as she said that.

“Kubonga mina MaSibisi. I have to go",I say.

“Okay, Work well”

“Thank you”, We end the call and I sigh after thinking about Mandisa who is in the office.

I turn back and make my way inside the office and she is already eating.

“That call was lengthy”

“It was”, I reply.

I go and sit on the chair next to her and pull the Nandos. She knows how I used to love it in Varsity. I would buy it every chance I get.

“We should go out for Dinner tonight”, She says.

“I can't tonight but tomorrow night we can”, I say and she smiles.

“Thats perfect. It gives me enough time to prepare”

“For what?”, I ask.

“For me to look good”, I chuckle and shake my head.

“What?”, She starts giggling.

“Usuyozipendake(You are going to paint your face)”, I say

”I am”, I look at her for a while.

“You are beautiful”, she blushed.

“Thank you”, I maintained my stare in her.

BUSISILE

I loved the strawberry farm the last time. I would admit I did and so Lethu told me we should go to her house and she would teach me how to make some strawberry pie. Her husband was out. She told me that she is a house wife but she studied. I wish that I can study, that is one thing I wish more than anything in the world. We are not picking up strawberries this time but there is a bunch in their kitchen. She goes and gets an apron and puts it around her neck and hands another one to me and I thank her.

“You will love the pie once done”,she says

“I hope so. Maybe I can make it at home once I know”

“Yes you can!”,she says.

We go and wash our hands and my phone rings. Is it Mabutho? I take it out and it is Mphembe. I answer the call.

“Baba”,I say

“Nkosikazi, Kade yagcinana(Long time)”,he says.

“I am sorry”

“I understand you might have been busy. Are you okay?”,he asks.

“Yes I am well. How is everyone home?”, I ask and Lethu looks at me.

“They are well. They are okay”, he says.

“That's good”, I say.

“one of the girls is going to have Umhlonyana next week and I want you back home”, he says. My heart skips a beat.

“Ohw”

“Yes. I want all my wives under one yard during that period”

“I will come back baba”

“Good”

Oh my God. I didn't think I would go back home this soon.

Chapter 12

I didn't think that I would be back home this early. Yes maybe I didn't want to come back home as yet and see the other wives and being insulted from every corner that I turn into but what choice do I have because I have to come back and prepare like the other wives. Well I thought I would come back a week before but Mphembe gave me a benefit and said that I can come back a few days before and Not a week. Mabutho will be going down with me home. He had to pause his work for his little sister's ceremony and ceremony's are a big thing in this family. It is taken seriously so people should drop everything they are doing and come back home.

We are a few kilometres from reaching the Ntuli household and I have been sleeping and looking out of the window and talking here and there with Mabutho but overall I am just nervous. I am wallowed in thoughts as I am starting at whatever passes in front of my eyes.

“What are you thinking about?” ,It's Mabutho.

I turn to him and look at him as he shifts his focus back onto the road waiting for me to answer him about my thoughts. I haven't seen Mandisa since forever, I don't know what is going on between them but it is not my business in this case. I sigh

and close my eyes before opening them and deciding to answer him.

“Nothing”, I say. He quickly steals a glance from me. An intense one and then he looks back onto the road.

“You can't say it's nothing Mabusi when you have been lost since we left the farm”, he says.

“Ngikhathazekile(I am worried)”, I finally say.

A woman shouldn't share their marital problems. My problem here is that I don't want to have children now with Mphembe and I don't know how to avoid that. He is my husband and I have to obey him. The fact that I have an interest in his son is very bad. I could be crucified for it.

“Ukhathazwa yini mama?(What worried you mama?)”, he asks and slowly takes my hand into his as he is driving.

“Mphembe wants us to have children”, I blurt that out and he looks over to me.

I tighten the grip of my hand around his and he does the same of which makes me relax a bit.

“You are scared?”, he asks.

“Yes”

“Of having children's?”, he asks.

“With your Father Mabutho. He already has many children. I know he is my husband and I have to obey him but I am scared. I just can't imagine my father ontop of me”,he laughs at my distress.

“Mabutho don't laugh please”

“How can I not when you say it like that?”,I frown.

“Buka mama ngiyaxolisa kodwa ngeke kwenzeke lutho. Ngiyethemba(Look I am sorry. Nothing will happen, I promise)”,he says.

“He will want to rest in my room tonight”,I say

“Don't worry. I will take care of things and you will sleep with me in my room”,I give him a look.

“Haibo Mabutho. No one should see me in your room. Your mothers will have questions”,I say.

I love being in his arms, I really do but we can't do anything out of order when we get home.

“Don't worry mama. Trust me”,I sigh.

“Don't get me into trouble Mabutho”,He slows down the car when we are close enough to his home and stops it.

“Come here”,he perks my lips and I close my eyes as I feel his tender lips on mine.

I open my eyes and look at him.

“Ngiyakuthanda Mabusi (I love you Mabusi)”, he says with much sincerity.

“Ngiyakuthanda nami Ntuli(I love you too)”, I say and he smiles.

“Calm down”, I nod and breathe in and out before he starts the car again and starts driving to his home.

When we approach the house already cars are parked outside on the yard and you could see the little reunions there by the gate with parents and their children. Mabutho drives in the yard and parks his car and his mother already is on her way towards the car. She comes to my side and opens the door for me and Mabutho unbuckled the seat belt for me and MaThabethe pulls me out of the car and squeezes me into a hug while I can smell the sweet powder on her.

“I am so happy to see you Busisile!”, she says as she hugs me.

“Me too Mah”, I can officially say that this woman really likes me.

“Hawu mama have you forgotten about me?”, Mabutho asks.

“I saw you two weeks ago Mabutho”, she says waving her hand in the air dismissing her sulking son who hasn't been welcomed by his mother

“Also Busisile. You saw her two weeks ago”

“Hayi Mabutho umona!”She says and Mabutho shakes his head.

“Take her bags to her room. Come”,she pulls me towards the main house.

I breathe in and out preparing myself for anything and meeting the other wives. I haven't seen Mphembe but I will see him after greeting the other wives. We get inside the kitchen and move to the living room and some of them are there with their other children.

“Sanibonani”I greet.

They look at me.

“Hawu washintsa boh (You have changed),MaGasa says in a bitter tone.

“She is young. She should change and explore”, MaThabethe says.

“Ushadile njalo(She is married)”,MaGasa says.

I keep my silence for a moment and look down onto my feet as they examine me. Yes I have changed a bit the way I used to dress but I like it. It's not revealing as much but I have my shoulders covered with the dress I am wearing so I thought I looked fine when I left the farm. Now I wish I could go back

there for a while and just come for the event on the day then leave again to the bubble I was stuck in there.

“Where can I find Mphembe?” ,I ask.

“He is outside by the Kraal” ,MaThabethe directs me.

I thank her and I make my way outside the house to the Kraal. I keep on taking short breaths like I am running out of air. My chest starts feeling like it is depriving me of my lungs taking in fresh air and taking out the air that is not needed. I get by the Kraal and Stand a distance as I watch Mphembe and his other married sons in there. I assume they are choosing a Goat that they will slaughter for the occasion. I am sure two will be chosen because this family on its own is big. Three would be enough in my defence.

I stand a little while before Mphembe sees me and he moves away from the Kraal and comes towards me. I breathe in and out as he walks towards me.

“Baba” ,I bow my head.

“I have missed you MaSibisi” ,he says in a cheer voice.

“Baba” ,I keep on saying that.

“Ngizolala kwelakho namhlanje (I will sleep in your room today)” ,That is something I have been avoiding or trying to avoid.

I heave a sigh before I answered him.

“Yebo baba. It's fine I will prepare for you”

“I would love that. I have missed your foot baths”he says.

“Yebo”,I don't know what to say at this point.

I hear footsteps approaching us as I have my head bowed looking at the floor and then they stop beside us.

“Mphembe”

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The voice says.

I breathe in and out. My breathing is trying to be steady but It can't be in the manner in want it to be. The effect that he has on me is something else that I don't know. I can't even be able to describe it fi I want to.

“Mabutho Ndodana. Kuhamba kanjani (My boy, how is it going?)”

“Its going well baba. It's going well”

“I hope so, are you treating your mother here well?”,I gaze upon them for a moment.

Mabutho steals a glance at me and smiles widely.

“Yes, we are living well.”

“That is good. I don't want any of my children to mistreat any of my wives”

“Don't worry baba. I will take care of our mothers. Mah is asking for Mamncane”,I look down again.

“Hayi, you can take her away.”, Mphembe says and we say our goodbyes to him and walk away. As we are between the houses going off to the main house Mabutho pins me on the wall and hovers over me.

“Mabutho someone might see this”

“No one will”,I feel agitated already.

“Mabutho”

“Can I kiss your lips mama? I will let you go after”,he is not giving me a choice here.

“We can't Mabutho”

“Ngiyacela(Please)”,he says softly as he leans towards me and captures my lips.

He holds my face closer to his that our noses touch and I gasp for air making way for him to passionately ignite the kiss more. I close my eyes and for a moment I forgot what is going on and the possibility of us being caught but enjoy the feeling. He pulls my body closer to his and I feel fuzziness in my stomach as he does so. It is like my body is feeling warmth that I don't know

how to comprehend. He breaks the kiss and looks at me with a smile. He is charming. Still I will praise his mother till the end. That woman birthed a beautiful child. Actually children because Bongani is also perfect in my eyes. They are a perfect blend of Mphembe and MaThabethe.

“You can go”,he says and steps back. I move away from him leaving but I turn back and look at him standing there with hands in his pocket while watching me as I move away from him before I disappear from his eyes.

I have been standing and going around since I came here. With serving the girls who are locked up in the hut as well and also with cooking and helping around. The more children came today and I could say that it is a full yard today. I am feeling tired after so long so I went to take a shower. It is the first time I have used a shower here. I never have until I learnt how to use it at the farm and it is very quick and convenient I should say. After I was done I heard a knock on my door and I was preparing bathing water for Mphembe. I o and open the door and Mphembe walks in the room.

“MaSibisi”,he comes and pulls me close to his portbelly as he smells of the goats blood.

“I need to bath and take a shower”,he says.

“I will prepare it for you baba”

“Thank you”,he plumps himself on the bed and I go and prepare a shower for him.

I come back and take off his shoes and then start bathing his dirty feet at the moment while massaging them. He closes his eyes and moan at my touch.

“I missed this most about you”,he says and I smile.

“The other wives don't do this for me”

“That is sad”

“Mmmh”,A knock comes into my door and I am startled a bit.

“Ubani?(,Who is it?!),he asks.

“NguSenzile baba(It's Senzile)”,I get off my knees as he groans and I wipe my hand before I go and open the door.

Senzile stands infront of the door holding a tray with tea on it and some biscuits.

“Kuthiwa angilethele ubaba lah(I was told that I should bring this for baba)”,He says.

“Thank you. I will give it to him”

He nods and runs off. I close the door and go to Mphembe.

“This is for you”,I place it on the dressing table .

“Thank you. Mmmh”,he says.

“The shower water must be ready now”

“Let me start with tea before it gets cold”,I nod and he starts with having his tea.

I go and discard the water and then go back inside my room. My phone pings and I go and get it. It's a message from Mabutho. I open it.

“_I will be there in an hour to fetch you_”,I don't reply. Instead I ignore it.

He shouldn't be doing this. Putting our lives at risk like this. Mphembe finishes his tea and goes out to get his shower.

Would you believe me if I said that Mphembe fell right into sleep right after showering. I don't know. I was expecting him to initiate something since he said when I come back we will start with making babies but no he is next to me snoring like I don't know what.

I have been looking at the roof while laying next to him as sleep hasn't come for me as yet or maybe it's because the snoring is getting to me too much that I can't close my eyes properly for a moment. My phone vibrates and I look over it and Mabutho's name flashes over it.

I take my phone and answer the call.

“You can't call me at this hour”,I say.

“Open up or I am knocking on the door”,I feel my heart skip a beat.

“No Mabutho go back to your room”,I whisper.

“I am not going anywhere Mabusi and people will see me here”,he says.

“Go to your room. I will be there shortly”,I say while sighing.

“Okay, I will be waiting”,he hangs up and I sigh as I hold onto my phone.

I look at Mphembe and then I tip toe out of the bed and wear my shoes before making my way towards the door. I have to quickly come back before he wakes up and realises that I am not in bed with him. I open the door carefully and when it was fully open I got out and closed it before running to where Mabutho's room is. I feel hands snaking around me as I am running like someone has caught me and I get a fright until I see who it is.

“Stop running. Come”,he pulls me to his room quickly and locks the door.

“Mabutho we can't do this. Your father might wake up any minute now”

“He won't. Those sleeping pills are strong”

“What?”

He goes to his bed and opens it then fixes the pillows.

“Come let's rest. I will wake you up when it's time to go”,he says.

“And your father?”,

“Don't worry about him. Trust me”,he says and I sigh and get in bed with him. He gets in behind me and kisses my neck sending tingles down my spine to my toe.

“I want to sleep like this every night”,that can't happen as long as we are here.

“Me too”,I say honestly.

I feel like sleeping too.

He brushes my back and it's soothing me. This, this will be the death of me.

Chapter 13

As promised Mabutho woke me up. He gently moved me as I was still consumed in the sleep that I was in and quiet frankly I was enjoying every bit of it.

“Mmmh?” ,I say with my eyes still closed as he shook me gently.

“Its 3 am Mabusi. You have to wake up”,He says.

“I still want to sleep. Can't we rewind the clock?” ,I ask while feeling a bit cranky as well from being woken up.

“I wish I could do so but I can't” ,he kisses my cheek then goes to slightly biting my earlobe.

“Mmmh mhh Mabutho”

“Wake up Sthandwa sami” ,he says and I finally open my eyes and turn to him.

“You look beautiful ” ,I know I don't but I don't protest against him.

“Thank you” ,I sit up from the bed and rub my eyes before I start with getting off the bed and he holds my waist and pulls me back.

“Mabutho I have to leave before anyone sees me” , I say.

“Wait for me. I want to accompany you” ,he says and I sigh.

He lets me go and gets off the bed. I close my eyes as he is shirtless then he tells me that I can open my eyes and I open them. I then do and look at him.

“Come”, I slowly get off the bed and he takes my hand into his.

He opens the door and checks the coast then he pulls me out of the door and we walk together going towards my room. I hope that Mphembe is still asleep. We get to my room and we stand in front of the door. He cups my face and gives me a light perk.

“I will see you mama”, I nod my head and I open the door and go inside careful not to make some noise.

I got inside and closed the door then made my way towards the bed and Mphembe is not snoring anymore which worries me but I get on the bed and keep my silence for a moment.

“Baba”, I call for his name but he says nothing.

I sigh after that and close my eyes for at least an hour so that I can wake up and prepare some food for him before he even wakes up from this bed.

I walk from the kitchen with my long skirt covering my ankles and a doek properly done on my head as I move along the outside rooms going to my room to go and serve Mphembe. I take a few breaths in as the kids greet me saying “Mamncane”,

as I walk past them and greet back as well. I get to my room and Mphembe is all up and awake and dressed as well.

“Awu, sekuyikho leso sokudla Nkosikazi?(Oh it's food time now?)”,he says as I bow to hand him the tray with porridge.

“Yebo baba”

“Ngiyabonga(Thank you)” ,he takes his food and then he adds what he likes into his porridge.

I look at him for a moment and then look down.

“I am sure you are tired. You should rest”,he says.

“I am not, thank you.” ,I say softly.

“Hayi mawusho njalo ke MaSibisi (If you say so)”,I then excuse myself that moment and leave him to enjoy his morning meal.

I cannot sit down and relax when everyone else is up and down with preparations of the event that will be happening in just a few hours to come. I haven't seen Mabutho this morning and my mind just thinks maybe he is around the yard or maybe he is with some of his siblings wherever he is. I go and help out where ever I can. The huts are already polished for the day so I don't have to do that today. The other wives seem to be staying out of my way and then I stayed Out of theirs that moment.

“Don't you feel like you are too young for this?”,I turn around from what I am doing on the washing line. I was placing the wet cloths on the washing line.

It was one of Mphembe's children the varsity ones.

“Excuse me?”

“I mean you are like my age so I don't get it.”,she says.

“I don't think you will even if you tried”,I say. She gives me an eye.

“MaSibisi!”,I look up to who is calling me and it's Mabutho from far ahead.

He is standing in a distance with hands in his pocket.

“Isho nje uthanda amakhehla(Just say you love old men)”

This girl says before she leaves.

I sigh before I finish what I am doing and I go to where Mabutho is standing and I stand in front of him.

“Hi”,he says

“Hey”

“I need to go to town for something. Can you come with me?”

“Will that be okay? Is it allowed?”,I ask

“I asked permission from dad an he agreed”,He says.

“Okay then,let me go and put these pegs away”,I say

“I will wait for you in the car”,I nod and I turn.

“Mama”,I turn to him as he calls for me.

He mouths an I love you and I blush before rushing off with a smile on my face. I go and out the pegs away and then I take off iphinifa(Apron) and hang it in the kitchen before I go out rushing to where Mabutho is. He is standing by his car talking to one of his brother's. As soon as I come they wrap up their conversation and I greet as they greet back before His brother opens the door for me and I thank him and Mabutho gets in the car as well and he starts the car. He hands a piece of paper to me.

“Mom said I should get this so I will need your help”,he starts the car and starts driving out of the Ntuli yards.

“Okay, I will help. Why didn't you come with one of your sisters?”,I look at him and he has a smirk on his face.

“I don't want to spend time with them like I want with you”

“Ah Mabutho”,he chuckles, then takes my hand into his.

“Ngiyakuthanda mama(I love you)”,he says. “I love you too”

He smiles and then brings my hand to his lips and kisses it from there.

I like that, I really like it alot. I can't stop smiling when he steals glances at me and looks at me for a moment. Music is playing on the radio and he increases the volume of the song.

“Ngizokwenza uMam'Ntuli wami(I will make you my wife)”,my cheeks feel heated that moment. I close my eyes for that moment.

MABUTHO

I can't help myself. It will be really hard for me to keep myself away from Busisile these day. I wish she was all mine and I wasn't sharing her with someone else. She is also sharing me because I haven't broken up with Mandisa as yet though my feelings for her are not the same anymore. I just don't know how to break it down to her that I would want us to go our seperate ways one day. Also this relationship of mine with Busisile is a bit complicated but is there any relationship that doesn't have any complications? I don't think so but I think we will get through all of this.

We are going shopping with her and it gives me enough time to spend with her. I love the innocence that she oozes and the way she looks so clueless on other things. Makes me excited that I will get to experiment first things with her. Like having a burger for example.

“Do you want a burger?”,I ask her while looking at her.

She moves her eyes from the windshield and looks at me.

“Please, After buying what we need at home”,she says.

“We can start with your burger then shopping later”

“Haibo Mabutho people at home are expecting these things early”,she says and I unbuckle her seat belt.

“Well I don't care, they can wait”,I lean in and kiss her lips.

She is taken for a moment but when I deepen it she responds quiet well to it. She releases a soft moan as per accompanied with her heavy breathing. I want to touch her thighs but due to the skirt she is wearing I can't careess those dark skinned thighs.

“Mabutho”,she says while catching her breath. I lick my lips after the kiss.

“People are watching”,she says with her eyes closed.

“They aren't”,she opens her eyes and looks at me.

“You are beautiful”,she looks away

“Thank you”

I want to keep her as mine. Forever maybe?

Chapter 14

The way Mabutho is staring at me brings out the shyness in me. I don't know what to do with myself as he is staring at me. It's like he's staring into my soul or trying to reach for it and grab it with his hands. He is pushing the trolley while I have the list in my hands. We went to order some burgers from Steers and I can't wait to indulge in one and taste all of those amazing sauces that come with them. I think I have found my new City favourite food so far and that is the burger.

"I think we have found everything needed from this list", I say looking at the list then what is inside the trolley to make sure that we haven't left anything out.

"I think everything is in here", I say

Mabutho doesn't respond to anything I am saying so I look up to him and he is quite staring at me for no reason that I know of.

"Ntuli", I say

"Mama", he responds.

"Did you hear what I just said?", he shakes his head without any shame of hiding that he wasn't listening to me.

"I was looking at you. I can't listen and look at you at the same time. I simply can't", Haibo.

I frown a bit as he says that.

“What do you mean?” ,I ask.

“You look beautiful” ,The frown disappears instantly replaced with a smile on my face.

“Thank you”

“That doek really suits you”

“Kodwa Mabutho, we need to start leaving so please let's focus on checking if everything is in here” ,I say trying to hide the fact that I am blushing.

“It's okay, we can come back and buy what was left out if it happens” ,he says casually

“I don't think we will have time for that.” ,He bites his bottom lip and nod.

“Let's go and pay” ,he says and starts pushing the trolley towards the tills.

We get there and we stand in a que waiting for our turn. He grabs some chocolate, P.S to be exact and then he placed it in the load of things in there. When it was our turn we offloaded everything for it to be scanned through and Mabutho paid for everything.

“Are you collecting stickers?” ,the cashier asks with such politeness.

“No, thank you”,I smile and she nods.

We thank her and start making our way out of the store now headed to the parking lot so we could offload all the things that are in this trolley. Once we get to the car Mabutho opens the boot and the car guard comes rushing to assist. He goes and opens the door for me and I thank him and get inside. Once there when the car guard was done I saw him give him some money before he went away with the trolley. I am sure some of them back home are asking themselves where I am. Especially Maka'Nkosinathi. She would have a very big problem because she will think I am not really doing anything to help back home. I am, I really am trying to get used to the wives but so far the only wife I am close to so far is MaThabethe. If she knew what me and her son are doing I don't think she would appreciate it and would like it at all. That scares me, sometimes those are the things that make me feel scared to do this. I am a married woman for goodness sake I am not supposed to be cheating on my husband! But then again, part of me wants to because it likes this feeling. This feeling of you being complimented by someone who is young. Looks young, this feeling of having someone to hold you every night while sleeping and gives you kisses in the morning. I know Mandisa is still in the picture but

Mabutho makes me feel like it is me and only me in his world. That I have nothing to worry about anyone sleeping next to him because he will sleep next to me at night. Is it safe to say that My step son behaves like my husband? Do you get it? No? It's find you will with time.

I am snapped back into reality when the driver's door opens and Mabutho gets in holding paper bags from Steers. He places them on my lap and they feel warm.

“I chose Sprite cold drink for you”, he says while looking at me as his perfume scent has invaded the car.

“Thank you”, I smile.

“Do we eat now or we go to my room when we get home”, he says.

“We can't do that”, I say.

“We can”

“The family members will ask questions”, I say

He chuckles.

“I am joking kodwa ngizolala nawe angithi namhlanje?(I will sleep with you tonight?)”, yes I have gotten used to it. I sleep better when in his arms.

“Yes”, here I am finding myself agreeing to this idea.

He smirks.

“Kwakhleke(Wonderful)”

We start eating in the car, with me making sure that I don't make it dirty. Moments in and already Mabutho is staring at me. I don't know what to do with myself when he does that. I don't know if I should stop eating or what. I really don't know.

“Sikhulekile kunina bo Ntuli, Mphembe...”

The thick insense smoke is covering the whole rondaval that is filled with all of the Ntuli family members. There are alot of us here which means this rondaval had to be big enough. A goat is being choked by the smoke as it starts to get restless while Mphembe is announcing that they are doing a ceremony for the young girl who had just started her periods. I remember a time when I started mine. I never got Umhlonyana because my parents don't have the means to do one for me. I wished I had one. Even Umemulo omkhulu but I did get one of some sort after Mphembe paid Lobolo for me to be his bride and before I moved to live here.

I look around the room and MaThabethe is seated next to me while she has a scarf over our laps to cover us both. This smoke is getting too much at some point but we soldier on. After that when everything was done we were released to go to what we

were doing. Tomorrow it's the ceremony and so we have to make sure everything is really prepared.

“Haibo Ntombi awusho”, MaThabethe says as we walk out of the hut.

“Mah”

“Have you seen Mabutho with someone nje at the farm. Like a lady of some sort?”, my heart skips a beat.

She is fishing for some information that I do know but not clearly.

“Ey Mah angazi ukuthi ngingathini(I don't know what to say)”, I lie.

“Oh Hayi Kulungile khululeka. (it's okay, don't worry) Sleep well”, she says and I walk off.

I am really tired and I just want to take a shower then go to sleep. I get to my room and I close the door. I take off all my clothes and also the doek and put on a shower cap and I go to the bathroom and get on with showering. I step into the shower and I start bathing. The warm water falling on my sling and it feels amazing. I feel myself relax under the shower head as I am getting wet.

“Mama!”

I am startled by a voice but then I listened carefully and it's Mabutho. How did he get in here?

“Mabutho?”, I ask

“kwangathi uyangabaza ukuthi yimina (It's like you are doubting it's me)”, he says while followed by a chuckle after.

“I didn't expect you now”, I say.

“I am tired. I just want to rest”, he says.

“Oh” I carry on with what I am doing until I am done.

I grab a towel and I wrap myself with it and get out of the shower.

I walk into the bedroom and he is in boxers laying on the bed. He turns to me and sits up when he sees me coming out from the bathroom.

“Come here”, he says softly and I go towards him and he pulls me to him and kisses my lips softly before he sucks on them and I respond to the kiss with much energy and passion. He then holds my waist bringing me closer to himself and I can feel the heat.

“Mmmh”, I moan in his mouth as his hands travel from my waist and hold my butt.

I throw my head back once he kisses my neck. Still that mush between my legs is felt. So as the tingles and heat I am feeling.

“Mabutho”, I say softly.

“Sthandwa sam”, he responds.

“Ngicela uthathe ubuntombi bami(Please take my virginity)”, I say.

He stops what he is doing and stares at me.

“Mabusi”

“Take my virginity. I want you to take it and make me a woman”, I say.

He is quite for a while and doesn't know what to say. He keeps in blinking as if he is trying to figure me out and what I have just said.

“You want me to take it?”, he asks.

“Yes I do”

“Busisile are you really sure about this?”, he asks once more for my assurance.

“Yes, I am sure”

He nods and perks my forehead then lips before he kisses my neck again. This time he removes the towel and he runs his

fingers between my thighs. I part my legs a bit and his hands run from my thighs near my valve. He gets there and cups it while kissing me. I moan as he lets his finger move to my clitoris and he starts rubbing there. I moan feeling this little enjoyment at the moment.

“My fingers are big so you might feel some pain”, he whispers softly into my ear and I nod while throwing my head back to give him more access to kissing my neck. He tries to put in his finger but it is. Bit painful that I stood on my toes.

“Its a bit painful”, I say.

“Ngiyaxolisa Sthandwa sami should I stop?”, he asks as he finally slips in the finger and thrusts it inside for a while before he puts in another. I feel the pleasure and gasp for some air as that happens.

“Mmh?”, he asks

“No”, What is this? Are fingers supposed to be in there? I doubt.

It feel nice though. It makes me feel good and I like it very much at this moment. I place my hands on his shoulders as he keeps on thrusting his fingers in and out of me. I feel like my knees are getting weak for a moment.

“Mabutho”

“Mama”

“I think my knees are failing me”,I say.

“Okay”,He says and then keeps on thrusting but holds my waist and when I feel like I was about to fall from this pleasure I was feeling he stops and he picks me up and places me on the bed. He gets ontop of me and removes the towel completely. He kisses my neck and then my lips.

“Ubungenzani?(What were you doing to me?)”,I ask.

“I was preparing you”,he says and I don't understand what it was for but I enjoyed it.

“Are you ready mama?” ,he asks.

“Yes I am”

He nods and gets off me and he goes and takes off his boxers and then pulls me by my legs to come closer to him and then he opens my legs. I can feel my heart beating against my chest. I am going to loose my virginity tonight. He starts rubbing the tip of his dick on my valve slowly and It feels nice before he started increasing his pace and I felt the pleasure increase. He stopped for a moment and pushed it in and I felt like jumping off the bed because I was starting to feel the pain as he entered deeper and deeper but he held my waist.

“Ungakhathazeki Sthandwa sami, kuzophela manje(Don't worry my love. It will be over now)”,he says.

I nod my head as he goes in deeper as I close my eyes and held onto the sheets. When he finally stopped I knew then that it was gone. I am not a virgin anymore and I gave it to my step son Mabutho.

I couldn't go out. Preferably I couldn't walk properly. Mabutho was turning me upside down left and right tossing and turning me like a pancake the whole night. He couldn't stop saying thank you as he felt what he was feeling while inside if me. He made me shake under his hold and I have never felt that pleasure.

He left this morning after he made sure we took a shower and I was okay. He promised that he would send a child with food to my room so that I can eat and then rest after. I thank him for that. A knock surfaces from my door and I shout a come in and Sizile walks in with a tray that has some food on it.

“Sawubona Sisi, uthe uBhuti angilethe ukudla kuwe njengoba ungaphilile(Hello Sisi, my brother said I should bring food for you since you are not well)”,I smile. Honestly I really love Sizile. He is a great child that I got along with when I first came here.

“Ngiyabonga, ungibongele(Thank you, please say thank you for me)”,he nods and places everything for me. When he was about to walk out MaThabethe walks in the room and Knocks on the door after.

“Hawu Ntombi how are you? Why are you in bed. I heard Sizile say that you are not okay”,she asks with concern.

“Siyanginqamula isiluma Sami, angikwazi nokuhamamba Kube engathi khona ongingqamula inyawo(My period pains are bad that I can't even walk, it's like someone is cutting my legs off)",I lie partially. I can't walk because it's burning between my legs.

“Awu nkosiyami. I will send Phumlani to go and get some medication for you that will help”.

“Thank you mah”

“Get well”,she stands up and smiles before kissing my forehead and leaving out of the door.

I breathe out and start eating while events of yesterday come back flooding into my mind like a movie as they play. I can't stop thinking of how delicate and good Mabutho made me feel yesterday. He made me feel good. Really good.

Chapter 15

MANDISA

I have been trying Mabutho for some time now. These days it is a bit hard to get to my boyfriend Kanti I have always had a way of getting to him even if he was going home I would've known. Well I haven't seen him in a while so I was thinking of buying a nice piece of lace and then I go and cook for him something that is not heavy and won't make me gain some weight as well.

I am rummaging through my closet for something to wear as my friend is rested on my bed typing away on her phone.

"Which dress is good?", I ask her absent self.

I turn around and look at her while placing hands on my waist.

"Haibo!"

"That dress is good", she points at the one I am holding.

"Its ugly"

"Why did you buy it then?"

"Mom bought it. Yazi Mabutho is acting strange lately", I say.

She lifts her head and looks at me.

“I mean he lives with the lady so...”

“That's his step mother. I confirmed it when I got her investigated. Plus she is too rural”

“If you say so”

“Plus Mabutho is not the cheating type. He never has so why would he start now?”, I turn around and fish out for another dress in my closet.

“Yes this one is perfect!” I say as I pull it out. My friend looks at me and shakes her head before she carries on with whatever she is doing on her phone.

MABUTHO

As much as I am here physically with my brothers but my mind is not here. It's with Busisile. I want to go and check if she is okay, I didn't have mercy on her yesterday and mainly because it felt so good to be one with her that I couldn't resist myself. I also can't believe that she gave me her virginity. Did she see me worthy of it that much? I am happy, really happy I would say.

My phone rings and I take it out. We are by the Kraal outside of it with my unmarried brothers while the married ones are inside. I move away from them and look at it. It is Mandisa. I

have been trying to avoid her for a while. I still don't know how to end things with her if I will. I answer the call.

“Baby”

“Mandisa how are you?”

“i am not good. I have been missing you”,I sigh.

“I have been busy lately”,I say.

“Yeah I know you always are. I want to come. I am at the mall on my way there now”,she says.

“Actually I am at home”,I say while scratching my head.

“What? You didn't tell me”

“It slipped my mind. I am sorry”,there is silence between us for a moment.

She heaves a heavy sigh from the other end of the line.

“Okay, I am not happy you didn't tell me though”.

“I am sorry”,she hangs up on me.

I know she is angry Wherever she is. I will deal with her later for now I want to find a way to go and check on Busisile.

BUSISILE

I don't want to lie, I am bored out of my mind being in here. I did fall asleep after some time and Mphembe came in to check on me before leaving with MaGasa to go wherever they are going. Tomorrow will be the day of the ceremony and I hope that I will be better. Right now I am feeling better but the pain is still felt down there.

A knock surfaces from my door as I am still layed in bed, just woke up from my little nap that I had been in.

“Come in!” ,I say.

I hope it's not one of the wives coming in here to ask me why am I not up. Yes MaKhumalo already did that and made me feel very bad about it. The door opens and he walks in and I get to sit up as he walks in.

“Mabutho” ,I pull the covers to cover my body well and he walks in further closing the door and locking it.

“How are you? I have been wanting to check on you the whole day and I couldn't hold myself now” ,he says and comes towards me and stands infront of me.

“You could've called” ,I say

“I wanted to see for myself. Did you eat?” ,I nod my head.

“Yes the kids have been bringing food in for me” ,I say.

“I missed you. Seeing you up and down the yard”, I giggle and look down.

“You missed what? You caused all of this”, I say

“I know”, he traces his fingers and lifts my chin up slightly so that I can look at him and he places a perk on my lips.

He started kissing me really well and then I responded to the kiss before breaking it.

“I don't want to end up being turned by you”, he chuckles.

“Okay, I should get going. Ngiyakuthanda (I love you)”, he says.

“I love you too”

He gives me a last kiss before he makes his way out of the door and closes it. I am left in the room all alone again. I lay back on the bed. I can't believe that I am not a virgin. I still just can't believe it.

“Sibiziwe Thina

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wele Mah ...!!”

The little girls are singing and dancing as we watch them half naked with their boobs all out. Their look so beautiful with all the beadwork around them. I am standing with the other

children who are more or less my age. MaJili is singing and dancing more as her daughter is the one who is having this ceremony. It is beautiful to watch, I won't lie. Yes today I feel a bit better. Much better that I am able to move with everyone else. If I was still a virgin I would've joined the little ones but I am not so I am on standby with everyone else.

Bongani comes and stands next to me as we are watching everything unfold. I am not used to him just like Mabutho's other brother.

“MaSibisi”,he says.

“Hello, how are you?”,I ask.

“I am good, how are you?”,he asks.

“I am well”,I smile slightly.

We keep quiet for a moment.

“Uyamthanda ?(Do you love him?)”,he asks suddenly after the long silence.

“excuse me?”,he stares at me.

“The first time he told me how he felt about I didn't believe it was this serious”,he says.

“Do you love him?”,he asks.

“Bhuti I...” ,I turn to him.

“Mabutho,do you?”,I swallow as my heart beats fast.

“Don't worry about anything. I just want to know”

“I need to be somewhere”,I turn and leave him there.

How does he know about our affair or relationship? I don't want Mphembe finding out this way. I am scared, really scared. I shouldn't have got into this situation. What if he goes and tells his father? I take out my phone and call Mabutho as I am going to my room.

“Sthandwa sam”,He answers.

“Please come to my room, I need to tell you something”

“Are you okay?”he asks with concern.

“Please come”

“Okay, I am on my way.”,he hangs up.

I really need to end this. I really need to end this whole thing before it gets worse.

I keep on pacing up and down the room as I wait for him to come. He comes after some time and he gets into the room and closes the door locking it.

“Mama, what's wrong?”,he asks.

“I...I ”,I swallow some spit in my mouth and breathe in and out.

“I think we should end our relationship. It's not going to end well for us Mabutho”he blinks and looks at me before frowning.

“Wait what?”

“Its for the best Mabutho”

“You must be hungry, I will get you some food”,he turns going to the door.

“Your brother knows about us so I don't want more people knowing. It will lead to massive drama”,I say.

“I said trust me Busisile and don't worry about him”,he says.

”I will get you food, I will be back”,he goes to unlock the door before opening it and going out.

I sigh and dump myself on the bed before burying my hands over my face.

Chapter 16

I stayed in the room and I dozed off after some time waiting for Mabutho. He left for a long time that is why I dozed off. When I woke up I was woken up by him putting me under the covers. His scent gave it away that it was him. It looked like lights were on as well.

“What time is it?”

“Its late”

“Is everyone asleep?”,I ask.

“No”,he tucks me in properly.

“Mabutho”

“Mmh”he looks at me.

I sit up properly off the bed and rub my eyes for a moment before looking at him.

“Are you angry at me?”

“Why would I be Sthandwa sami?”,I asks.

“That I wanted us to break up”

“That won't happen Mabusi”,he says.

I keep my silence for a moment and just look at him.

“I just felt scared for a moment.”

“I understand but talk to me and don't decide to take the easy way out”

“Ngiyaxolisa Mphembe(I am sorry)",I look down and fiddle with my fingers.

He places his fingers under my chin and lifts my head so that I can look at him.

“Ngiyakuthanda yezwa?(I love you okay?)",I nod my head.

“I love you too”

“Don't worry about anything”,I nod my head once more.

“Okay”,he lets me go.

“Shift so I can get in bed”,I shift to the side as he takes off his shoes and gets in bed.

He wraps his arms around my waist and I lay my head on his chest. I wish I could lay like this in his chest forever. I wish there was an forever in this situation.

“You are quiet. What are thinking of?",he asks.

“Nothing”,I softly say.

“Mmmh”,I lift my head to look at him.

“Really it's nothing”

“Baby you know you can talk to me”,he says.

“I know. I love you for that",he smiles.

“Awuphinde futhi ngizwe mama(Please repeat, I want to hear it again)”,I giggle.

“I love you”,I say softly.

”I love you more.”,he says.

I sigh and breathe out.

“Won't everyone come and check up on me?",I ask.

“I told them that you said you are very sick so you don't want any disturbances”,I shoot him a look

“Mabutho”

“I don't want interruptions with you”

“Mmh”,I shake my head. This man!

MANDISA

I was angry I won't lie and hurt at the same time that Mabutho didn't tell me that he is heading home. I feel like we are being

distant and that has never happened before. Mabutho has never made me feel like our relationship is rocky, I just hope maybe it's the anger and hurt that is talking more than anything because I love that man and if there is another woman in his life. That woman won't stay long and I will make sure she disappears from Earth forever. I love my farm boy so much that I don't see myself with anyone else. I don't see myself starting a relationship with anyone else or see anyone who possess great husband qualities like Mabutho.

My father already approved him and that is also important so I don't think I want any other man than him.

I just woke up and I look at my phone expecting some message but nothing. I sigh and dial his number and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Hello”

“Mabutho”, I say.

“Mandisa, how are you?”

“A bit angry but I am okay. I just miss you”, I say

“I do too”, I sigh.

“When are you coming back home?”, I ask

“Tomorrow maybe”, he says.

"And what about work?"

"Everything is okay that side. Look my father is calling me. I will call you okay?" ,I just nod.

"Mabutho I love you okay?"

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I say.

"I know",he says.

I sigh and then hang up after that. Useqomile Loh, no it can't be. Maybe I am just looking into nothing. Mabutho would not cheat on me. He would tell me when he wants to go his seperate way. He is not like that. I get off the bed and make my way to the bathroom to brush my teeth and wash my face. Good thing it's the weekend anyway so I will just stay indoors and watch some TV.

BUSISILE

I am ready to leave this place and be free with Mabutho and us being together without behaving like thieves in the night. I just finished bathing, he left early in the morning as usual without anyone seeing him. He said I should trust him and I do trust

Mabutho. I just have never done this before. I haven't seen Dudu in a while, I might as well ask to go and see her before we leave. Yes! I should do that. I get out of the bathroom and a knock surfaces from my door. I quickly grab a dress and wear it before I go and answer the door and it is Mphembe. I open the door widely while bowing my head and he walks in the room and goes to sit on the bed.

“Baba”, I go towards him.

“MaSibisi unjani?”, he asks.

“I am well and yourself?”

“I am fine. I am worried about you, you have been sick since you have been here. I think you should stay behind for a while before going back to the farm with Mabutho”, I look up to him.

“Ngicela ukubuza ukuthi ubaba ucaze ukuthini?(Can I ask what does baba mean?)”

“I mean that you will be staying here until I can say you can go”, I feel my heart skipping a beat.

“I won't be leaving?”, I ask just to clarify what he is saying.

“Yes”, I feel my stomach turn. I swallowed.

“Yebo baba”, I am heart broken. I want to leave, I don't want to stay here.

He stands up and walks out of the room and I close my eyes trying to hold my tears back. I breathe in and out before I wipe the tears that are making their way down my cheeks. I stand up and then I go towards the door quickly and make my way out. I go to Mabutho's room and knock on his door. It opens and he looks at me.

“Mama what is wrong?”

“I am not leaving with you. I am staying”, I say it so bitterly. It's a bitter pill to swallow.

“What? Why?”, He frowns.

“Your father said I am staying. I am not leaving with you”, I heave a heavy sigh trying to release the lump that is in my throat.

“I will talk to him”, he says.

“Please. I don't want to stay”, I say and he pulls me inside the room and closes the door before he wraps his arms around me.

“Don't cry. I will sort things out”, he says and I sob on his chest. I really don't want to stay here with everyone. I want to leave.

NARRATED

Zanele moves swiftly around the house going to her mother's bedroom where her mother is seated reading a Bible. Yes MaKhumalo may be heartless and contain no Christian value in her but she loves reading the Bible. To her it's a joyful thing to do even though this family is traditionally orientated. Zanele walks into her mother's room and quickly closes the door.

“Mah ngiza nezinye(Mom I have some news)”,Zanele says and goes on her knees in front of her mother.

MaKhumalo puts away the Bible ready to hear what her daughter had to say.

“What is it?”

“Leyanto ekuthiwa uMamncane(That thing called Mamncane)”

“What did she do?”, MaKhumalo more eager to hear.

She doesn't like Busisile nor MaThabethe or MaJili. She gets along very well with MaGasa.

“I saw her at Mabutho's room. The next thing she is inside”, MaKhumalo gasps.

“You are lying!”

“Stru I am telling you”,Zanele crosses her fingers swearing on what she saw.

“What is she doing in there?”

“I don't know”

“Mphembe won't like this!”, Zanele continues.

“Don't tell anyone for now. I want to see what is really going on there”, MaKhumalo says in thoughts and Zanele looks at her mother before she nods her head. She can't go against her but she also wonders what is going on between the two. .

. *BUSISILE*

Mabutho tried to cheer me up and I am really glad to have a man who is gentle and calm as him. He makes everything feel alright even when things seem upside down for a moment. He is actually strong should I say and his calmness scares me sometimes. Especially in situations where we should be panicking he doesn't. He possesses his calm aura. Makes me wonder if he does go through emotions of fear of something because I do. All the damn time I do.

“Are you sleeping?”, he asks as I am silent.

I am laid on his chest as he is breathing slowly while he is caressing my hair and running his fingers through.

“No I am not”

“I won't leave today”,he says.

“Why?”

“I won't leave without you. I will be bored all alone in the house”,he says and I giggle.

“You have stayed alone”,I also want to leave.

“I don't want to anymore”

“Mmmh”

“Don't worry. I will talk to dad about this”,I nod my head.

I hope he gets through to him.

Chapter 17

MANDISA

It's really early hours of morning and today I am prepared to get to work on time and look good also in that sense I want to have a great day, as I prepared myself to go and take a shower my phone rang and I quickly went to check on who might be calling me at such wee hours of morning and it was my dad. I answered.

"Dadddy"

"Princess, how are you?", yes as old as I am I still call my dad like that.

"I am good, I am surprised by your call this morning. Is everything okay? Is mom okay?", I ask quickly as my thoughts ran wild.

"Yes everything is okay, your mother is fine. I wanted to inform you that I am leaving for Rustenburg this morning so I won't be in at the office."

"Don't you need your P.A with you on that trip?", he laughed.

“No thank you, I will be fine”, I really was hoping that he would need me so that I can leave for a while and get some fresh air, I need it.

“Okay then, travel well”

“Thank you, We will talk later”, I nodded before we ended the call. I sighed and looked at my phone.

I wonder what is going on with Mabutho, he used to call me every chance he got and now I hardly got his calls. He can't possibly be cheating on me at this time. We have been together for so long that we cannot break up now. I sighed and made my way to the bathroom to take a shower.

BUSISILE

I woke up early today even though I am a bit tired but I was in a very happy mood this morning and it is because of Mabutho. We did it again, yes I slept with him and I have not felt thus pleasure before then what I felt yesterday. Anyway I went to the main house and then I got to the kitchen and started with preparing for cooking of the porridge for Baba, I was moving around the kitchen helping some of the wives that were awake and up as well.

“Waze wamoyizela boh(You are so happy)”,MaKhumalo says.

“Its nothing”

“Or it's small boys that make you smile like that”

What does she mean?

“Ubaba usevukile”

It's MaJili that announces, he spelt in her room last night and so we had to wake up and prepare for him.

“You are so glowing this morning”,MaJili says

I smile. Is it that obvious?

“Can I please be excused?”

“Sure”

I leave the room and I go to my room and I open the door and get inside. I close and lock it before I walk up to the bed to sleeping Mabutho and I stand beside him.

“Mabutho”

I shake him to wake up.

He shoots his eyes open and looks at me.

“MaSibisi”,he says.

“Wake up, it's morning and the sun has risen”,I say

“Ngicela ubuyele engubeni(please come back into bed)”,he says

“I have to go and cook and clean as well.”

“There are alot of girls here in the yard baby, please”,I sigh.

“Kodwa Mabutho”

“I love you”

“I love you as well”,I give him a light kiss on the lips.

“Cela ungiphinde mama(Please do it again mama)”,He says.

“Okay”,I giggle

I kiss him again and he smiles.

“Okay let me wake up now”

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he gets off the bed and goes to the bathroom and I stay and make the bed and clean up the room as well. I take his pants that he wore yesterday and folded them nicely.

He comes out after some time and he looks at me.

“Can you please go to my room and pick out an outfit for me”,he asks

“Okay”,I walk out of the room and looked around before I quickly made my way to Mabutho's room.

I got it and I quickly went to pick out clothes for him that he will wear and then after that I got to make my way out back to his room quickly. After I gave him his clothes I left him there in my room and quickly made my way to the main house and majority was up already. I greeted and then also dished for myself and waited for Mabutho to walk in so that I can dish up for him as well.

After some time he entered with his brothers laughing at something they must've shared amongst themselves.

“Bafana bami”,MaThabethe says.

“Sanibonani boh Mah”,They greet and we all greet back.

“The food is ready, Busisile will dish up and bring it to you”,MaThabethe says.

This woman really likes me. I mean there are their sister's here but she chose me to do the job of which I would gladly take.

“You really love Busisile”,Malhum MaKhumalo says in an unhappy tone.

I go about dishing up ignoring her.

“So? Is it a problem?”,MaThabethe asks.

“It will be”

“Don't bore me”,MaThabethe says.

I have never heard MaThabethe talk back to MaKhumalo before.

MaKhumalo clicks her tongue and she walks out of the kitchen. I finish dishing up for the Men and made my way out going to where they are seated. I find them seated outside Bongani's room on a bench. I serve them.

“Siyabonga Mama(Thank you)”,Philisani says and I nod after serving them.

I moved away from them and went to also eat as well in the kitchen with the other wives. The young girls who are my age don't really like me and have proven that they don't like me at all of which I have accepted for that matter.

MANDISA

In all my life I have never been like this. Worry, right now I would've moved on and just fucked it off but this is Mabutho and I love him. Maybe his family vacation is holding him back and yes also rural places don't have network so that is the better explanation of him not contacting me as yet. I do wish that I left with my dad though , I really needed to be out of the city and just refresh my brain in the process of it all.

I am out with my friend at the mall and we are doing some shopping. It has been some time since I last saw her as well so I thought that we hold meet and relax together while catching up on each other's lives.

“This dress is beautiful ”,I say while holding it against my body.

“Yes it is really”

“I should buy it”

“Mandisa where is Mabutho?”

“He is at his home. He told me”,I say

She nods and goes about her business.

“Wena? Your mister I haven't seen him in long time”

“Oh he is there. He asked me to move in with him and I agreed. I will move in next week”

What? I have always wanted to move in with Mabutho but him being so traditional he declined it and said I will only move in with him when he pays lobolo for me. Of which when is that going to happen.

“Oh I am so happy for you friend!”

“Thank you...” ,My phone rings and I put the dress down me fiddle inside my bag before I find it and take it out.

I get to it and then I look at the screen. I quickly answer.

“Hello”

“Mama”, I am trying to be angry here.

“Mabutho ufunani?(Mabutho what do you want?)”, I ask.

“I am coming back today. I want us to talk”, He says.

My heart skips a beat.

“Ngani?(About?)”

“Everything that involves us. I have been thinking”, I start to feel excited.

Could it be that he is going to propose tonight?

“Okay”

There is silence between us.

“I love you bye”, I hang up and look at my friend.

“Lets get me an outfit. Mabutho is proposing tonight and I have to look good.”

“I am so excited”, my friend says.

“Me too, finally!”

Yes finally now I am going to be Mrs Ntuli.

MABUTHO

As much as I want to stay here for a long time because Busisile is here but I have to go back and sort some things out for us and also go check on the farm and monitor things that side. I called Busisile inside my room and she came as soon as she possibly can. I told my mother that I am leaving and she packed my clothes for me and I was ready to leave now.

She enters the room and looks down on the floor. She is beautiful, I don't know how to explain how I feel when I see Busisile. I feel peace and calmness when she is in my arms.

“You called me in”, She says and I look at her as she gazed on me.

“Come here”, She comes closer to me and she stands in front of me.

I pull her on my lap to sit there and then I look at her face.

“I am leaving today”

She looks at me before she opens her mouth to speak.

“Leaving? Alone?”, I sigh and nod .

“I will be back as soon as possible. I will call you I am not deserting you but I love you. I want to sort out my farm and also when you come back you need to go to school”

“What if your father wants to sleep with me?”

“Don't worry about that okay?”, She is a bit hesitant about it but she nods.

“Okay”, she replies.

“Can I get a kiss?”, I ask.

She sighs and nods before I lay my lips on hers and kiss her.

“I love you Mabusi”

“I love you more Mabutho”

She looks into my eyes. I love this woman so much.

Chapter 18

BUSISILE

To say I am saddened by Mabutho leaving would be an understatement. I was really not happy but I could not hold him back from leaving. It has been a month since he left. We do talk on the phone as he calls as much as he can and I do get the time to talk to him. Mphembe has been trying for us to have a baby but he would fall asleep. I then saw an opportunity one day and lied about it and said he did sleep with me but he fell asleep during the course of it.

He believed it but he wanted us to try again just so that he can be sure. It's early hours of morning and I was sleeping in my bedroom with Mphembe. It was his night with me. I jumped off the bed and went to the bathroom to pee. After that I felt like vomiting and I turned to the toilet and vomit inside. I wipe my lips and feel like vomiting once more and I do so.

“MaSibisi ukahle?(MaSibisi are you well?)”,It's Mphembe.

“Yes I am well baba”

“You sound like you are vomiting”,He says.

“It must be last night's food.”

“Or maybe a Ntuli”,My heart sinks to my stomach.

I flush the toilet and go to rinse my mouth and walk out of the bathroom.

“Ngeke kukwazi ukuthi ngithwale ngokushesha kanje baba(It can't be possible that I got pregnant this early baba)”,I say.

“It happened to MaGasa”,What?!

I cannot be pregnant.

“Let me call in UMaMhlongo to assess you”,He says taking his clothing excited and walks out.

I sink on the bed. I cannot be pregnant. If I am pregnant then it means I am pregnant with Mabutho's child. That is a mess, a huge one!

Maybe I am not pregnant and it's just bile. Yes it's bile. I calm myself down before I start to clean up my room.

I have been stressed about this situation since morning. Mphembe hasn't told anyone as yet that there is a possibility that I am pregnant and I am grateful for that but I am still stressed though. I have been cooped up in this room since after breakfast when Mphembe wasn't there. He surely left and went to get MaMhlongo wherever she is. Whoever she is. A firm knock surfaces onto my door.

“Busisile yimi uMaThabethe!(it's me MaThabethe)”,I go and open the door.

“Are you well? You have locked yourself in here”

“I am okay, just minor flue”,I say.

“Oh, I wanted to check up on you. Also baba is back he is asking for us ”

I start to panic.

“Are you okay?”,She asks again with worry on her face.

“Yes I am okay mah”

“Okay come ets go and hear what that man wants from us”,She takes my hand into hers as we walk out of my room.

I am really scared right now. Atleast they won't take a pregnancy test on me right? Right? We walk into the family rondaval and everyone is seated. The door is closed when we walk in and MaMhlongo is a Sangoma I assume because she is the only one I don't know.

“Hlala phansi lah ocansini ntombazane(Sit here on the mat girl)”,I do as I am told.

I am scared.

“Lay on your back”,I look around the room.

“MaSibisi lay on your back and take instructions from MaMhlongo so that everything goes well”,Mphembe says.

I breathe in and out before I lay down on my back and she comes to hover over me. She pulls my skirt up and rips my underwear off me and she sniffs it before she dips her fingers in me and I squirm.

“Be still”

“It hurts”,I say. She is doing it roughly.

She then pokes onto my stomach.

“Stop!”,It's MaThabethe.

“She is in pain can't you see?”

“MaThabethe...”,Mphempe tries to interject.

“No, leave her if you are going to cause pain on her and we will buy pregnancy test sticks. This is the 21st century and she is young for this”

“Waze wamkhulumela boh(You are her spokes person boh)”,MaGasa says.

The sangoma carries on and when she is done and dips her hands in some Muti before she takes her bag full of bones. MaThabethe comes and takes me into her arms.

The sangoma throws the bones around and looks at them before she takes the Muti and it has turned a different colour. It's red while it was greenish back then.

“She is pregnant”,She says.

What?!

Commotion starts within the room amongst the wives seemingly unhappy but my mind is roaming at the word“ Pregnant”.

“Pregnant?”

“Is it even Mphembe 's child?!”,MaKhumalo bursts.

“Its a Ntuli. It's a Boy”,Mphembe gets more excited.

Tears leave my eyes and I get up from there and run out of the room with them calling me back.

I run out of the yard. I can't do this, I can't carry Mabutho's child. I ran as far as I could and sat down on grass when I got to where I wanted to. I started crying.

“Busisile!”,It's MaThabethe.

How did she even keep up with the way I was running.?

She comes towards me and stands in front of me.

“Come Sisi don't cry”,She says.

“Mah I can't I...”

“I know having a child at this age and with a man old is not ideal but it's a blessing from God”, She says.

I feel more guilty. I wipe my tears and look at her.

“I m sorry mah for disrespecting you”, I say.

“You didn't”, She says so kindly.

“Its not Mphembe's child. I never slept with him”, I quickly say.

She covers her mouth so quickly.

“Uqonde ukuthini Busisile?(What do you mean Busisile?)”, I looked down and fiddled with my fingers.

“It is Mabutho's child”, I fiddle with my fingers more and cry.

“I am sorry”, I quickly say.

“Get up, don't tell anyone this for now”, She says pulling me up and I nod.

“Wipe those tears and when we get home we pack our clothes we are leaving”, she says.

I just nod agreeing to whatever she is saying. As instructed we walked back home in silence consumed between us and when we got home she told Mphembe to give me space when we got home to sink in the news. I can't believe I am pregnant I still

can't. We packed our bags as she had instructed and I waited for her to tell me what to do next.

“Siyabonga Sbusiso, siyaxolisa ukuk'hlupha ebusuku (Thank you Sibusiso, we are sorry to bother you at night)”, MaThabethe says to Sbu.

“Its no problem mah”, He replies.

I have been quiet since we left home. No one knows we had left and I am happy with that but mostly scared as well. Maybe I shouldn't have told MaThabethe but I was panicking and I didn't know what to do as well.

“Come”, She says and we get out of the car.

We caught a taxi coming here and then we called Sbu to come and fetch us because it is late

I held onto my bag for dear life as we made our way inside the premises to the house. MaThabethe knocked on the door and rang the bell.

“I'm coming!”, a voice said

The door opened and it was Lethu, she quickly hugged me.

“It has been so long since I saw you. Sawubona mah”

“Yebo Ntombi”, MaThabethe replies.

“Why travel so late?” Lethu speaks but I don't answer.

“We have an urgent matter. Where is Mabutho?” MaThabethe asks as we walk inside.

We get to the sitting room and Mandisa is there as well crying her lungs out while she is on her knees holding onto Mabutho's legs with Lethu's husband trying to take her off.

“Mabutho don't do this to us please.” She cries.

“Mah, Mabusi what are you doing here?” His mother places her bag on the floor.

“We need to talk it's urgent”, MaThabethe says.

“Mandisa” Lethu's husband pulls her off him as she is crying.

“I can't parent alone”, Mandisa cries those words out.

“Mandisa!”, I look down.

MaThabethe takes my hand and we walk up the stairs. This is a mess really. She gets into the room she usually uses and she places our things down.

“You will sleep with me tonight”

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She lets out a smile and I feel some relief a bit.

We sit there for a while and Mabutho walks into the bedroom after knocking.

“Sanibonani”

“Sit down”, He finds a spot and sits down on the bed. She stands up and stands in front of us.

“I don't know what is going on between you two but something is going on and I want an explanation”, I look down before I glance at Mabutho and he breathes in and out.

“I love MaSibisi mah”, Relief washes over me.

“You do know she is married to your father”

“Yes I do but I can't help myself. I would like to marry her. If it was up to me then she would be my wife already”, I slightly smile.

“Nkosi Yami”, She places her hands above her head.

“I hear you but this is a mess. Your father will not be happy. It's obvious that she loves Busisile as well”

“But he is old for her”, Mabutho says

“Wena? Aren't you old?”

“Only by a few years but I am young”, His mother chuckles.

“Kade ngangizwa jehova”

“Sothini because there is nothing we can do now.”,Mabutho turns to me and looks at MaThabethe.

“Eh I have an announcement or issue to address”,He says
We wait for him to speak.

“Mandisa is pregnant.”,My heart sinks and tears stream down my cheeks.

She is pregnant? How?

“That woman that was crying?”

“Yes,she is my ex girlfriend and she is pregnant. 4 months pregnant”,I stand up.

“Busisile sit down”,MaThabethe says.

“I am sorry Sthandwa sami",Mabutho jumps up to hold me in his arms while I cry.

“Jesu Mabutho ! You have created a mess.!",MaThabethe says seemingly frustrated.

“I am sorry mah”

“Sorry?! What about Busisile? She is also pregnant yazi you can't zip up your pants just like your father”,She says and of pulls me away from Mabutho.

“Pregnant?”

“Get out”,MaThabethe instructs.

“MaThabethe ngicela siyikhulume lendaba sehlise umoya (Can we talk about this and calm down)”,Mabutho tries to say.

“Mabutho get out before I throw my shoes on you!”,His mother says.

He stares at me for a while and let's out a Sorry before leaving the room. What have I done? Why can't I run away?MaThabethe cradles me in her arms but I can hear her huffing and puffing about what she has heard as well. How could I be so stupid and land myself in such a mess.

“Ngiyaxolisa Mah”,I kept on saying that as she rubs my back.

“It is okay Busisile. The mess is done we have to find a way forward about this”,she mentions.

“I will see what I am going to do”,she continues to say.

I keep on sniffing but tears keep on rolling down my cheeks.

MABUTHO

I don't know what to do at the moment,I am stuck in thoughts as I make my way down the stairs and I find Nkanyezi seated on the couch with Lethu next to him. Mandisa is gone and she mentioned that she will not give up. That is another problem I

have. I cannot believe that Busisile is pregnant. I do not know what to think at the moment. Should I go back upstairs and beg my mother that we should talk this through. That I actually want to talk to Mabusi and tell her that everything will be okay and Mandisa being pregnant will not change my intentions of being with her.

“Man we are leaving now”, Nkanyezi mentions and I nod.

I can't speak at the moment. I look at them for a moment before I escort them out of the house. They get to their car and I wave my hand as Nkanyezi gives a hoot before he drives his car off and they are out of sight. I stand in one position for a moment letting the cold wind bathe my skin for a moment. I breathe in and out and sigh, I need to come up with answers and they all solely stand on my shoulders. I turn around and make my way inside the house. I hear some rattling sounds coming from the kitchen and I go there to find my mother preparing some tea. She turns around and faces me before she carries on with what she is doing.

“MaThabethe ayidle iy'shiyele(I am sorry)”, she keeps quiet and carries on with what she is doing then she turns around and faces me.

“Did you think of Busisile in all of this love thing of yours Mabutho?”, she frowns and places her hand on her hips.

“I did”,I say

“If you did then you would have not impregnated your father’s wife, let alone sleep with her!”,she says.

“Nihleli lah kanti niyanyobana(You live here to sleep with each other)”,she mentions.

I keep my silence to let her take out whatever she wants to say.

“You have to tell everyone about what you and Busisile did”,she says.

“Mah can we wait until Busisile shows before we mention anything”,I say.

“Everyone knows that she is pregnant. The sangoma was there when they tested her”,I cuss under my breath

She throws a swab my way.

“Hayi Mabutho, fix this!”,she points at me and goes back to making her tea. I stand there for s while before walking away from her and going up the stairs. I rush to my mother’s room and I open the foor and find a sobbing Busisile. My heart breaks at the sound of that. I never intended on making her cry. I never wanted that but it is happening right now. With each sob my heart feels pain and also in the pit of my stomach.

“Sthandwa sami”,I walk further in and go to embrace her.

She keeps on sobbing and I rub her back. I swallow my spit.

“I am sorry”,she lifts her head and looks at me in her redish eyes.

“Sthandwa sami ngiyaxolisa(My Love, I am sorry)”,I mention.

“I can not keep up with this Mabutho. Everyone will blame me”,she says and I pull her further towards me.

“I take full responsibility. It will not happen just trust me”,She nodded.

“I love you mama”,She nods again and I wipe her tears. I heave a heavy sigh.

I have to find a way to fix this.

BUSISILE

I slept well after MaThabethe got tea for us in order to help me calm down. She has been really nice to me which I did not expect after sleeping with her son and getting pregant from him. Actually cheating on my husband with her son. I did not expect the way she has reacted but anyway I will just mention that maybe she has not fully processed the news as yet.

Mabutho impregnated two women so she has to digest that.
Out of wedlock even!

I woke up early today and went to make some porridge for breakfast. As I was cooking Sbu came in the kitchen and greeted and I did the same.

“It is so good to have you back. I have missed having you around Ntokazi”,he mentions.

I just laugh at that.

“I will not be staying for long”,I say.

“Hawu why?Did you get another job?”,he frowns.

“No, I have to be home. My husband needs me there”,I just say.

He nods.

“Well do visit alot”

“I will”,I smile.

I carry on with making the porridge while he watches. After some time Mabutho walked in and he looked at us before he greeted.

“Sbu has the quantity of what the clients need have been met with milk?”,Mabutho asks.

“Yes, I just met it yesterday”,he mentions and Mabutho nods.

“I have a meeting to attend”,he says and disappears after that.

I can not look at him at the moment. I am still trying to process that Mandisa is pregnant.

Chapter 19

MANDISA

I have been crying on my friends lap yesterday until I passed out. I woke up with a massive headache and sat up on the bed while I was still dressed in yesterday's clothes. She comes inside the bedroom and she has a glass of water in her hands.

"Hey Mngani, how are you?", she asks softly.

"I feel awful"

"Mabutho...he...he does not love me anymore. What will I do with this child? We were supposed to get married soon and be together Mngani", My friend lets me vent and sits next to me.

My heart is aching at the moment.

"You will be the best mom, that I know. Forever is not always promised to us with the people we love but make the best of it. I know it's hard but you will get through it"

Her words of encouragement bounced off my ears.

"I want him, no one else", my voice starts cracking as I look at her.

I love Mabutho so much, I love my farm boy. The father of my unborn child. I have to fight for us.

“I know Mngani, its not easy but it will be okay”,she comforts me. Still it doesn't do anything to me, instead I yearn to have him with me the most.

Why did he give up on us?Why would he let me go? I do not understand. I ask for my phone and my friend gets it for me and I go to my contact list and dial his number. It rings a few times before it gets answered.

“Mandisa”,he says.

“Mabutho why are you doing this to me?”

He sighs.

“I do not want to string you along. I love someone else”,my heart breaks.

“What about our child Mabutho!?”

“I will take full responsibility for my child. Now can I be excused? We will talk some other time.”

He hangs up on me.Tears stream down my cheeks more as my heart is aching badly than before. I feel like I will undergo a panic attack at this point. I decide to call my dad to come and fetch me as I need to be with my mother. My family does not know that I am pregnant yet and I don't even know how will I

break the news to them that I am pregnant out of the wedlock and the father of my child just told me that he loves someone else.

I dial my father's number and it rings a couple of times before it gets answered.

“Princess”

“Daddy can you come and fetch me I am not okay”, I say through my sobs.

“Okay I am coming now my baby, daddy will be there”, I sniff.

I hang up from the call and I rest my head on the bed and carry on wallowing myself in tears and pain.

BUSISILE

I helped with the cleaning today, I am not crippled just because I found out that I am pregnant no but also I am just a month pregnant so no one would actually know I am pregnant until I show of which I am praying does not happen. A part of me wants to run away from this mess that I have found myself in and I have no one to blame but myself but where will I go if I run? I can't go back to my family because they will send me back and if they find out about this shame I would be crucified by the whole community at land.

MaThabethe is at the living room reading a magazine while I am here in the kitchen making some tea for her in this now cloudy yet warm weather. The kettle clicks indicating that the water has now reached its maximum temperature. I pour the water into the cup and I put the kettle back before I pick up the tray and make my way to the living room. I put the tray in front of her and she discards the magazine from her attention.

“Thank you my child”, I nod my head.

“Has Mphembe tried calling you?”, She asks as she assembles her tea.

“Yes mah”, I reply.

I looked at that phone while it rang as I did not know what to say to him when I answer the call. He is looking for me and MaThabethe that I know because we left without telling anyone at all where we are going.

“I won't say that I am not disappointed in the both of you MaSibisi, I really am. I did not expect this at all but at the same time I understand where this is coming from. Mabutho is more or less around your age group and you wanted to explore that with him and I feel like he took advantage of that as the older one between the both of you. I wish this situation was different from the both of you. He betrayed his father in this instance as Mphembe loves you dearly”, I look down.

“You do know that right?” ,She carries on.

“Yes mah”,I cast my eyes to the floor.

“Do not worry I will try and figure things out. Just don't stress”,She sips on her tea.

The main door opens and I look up and my eyes land on Mabutho who walks in and closes the door behind him. I don't move from the spot that I am standing in instead he just comes towards us and he stands by the couch next to his mother.

“Sanibonani”,He greets.

I greet back and his mother keeps quiet.

“MaThabethe ngicela sixoxe sibonisane. Angithandi makunje phakathi kwethu(MaThabethe can we talk, I don't like it when things are this way)”

“Can you un-Impregnant Busisile and save her from the Cross fire?” ,He keeps quiet because he can't do that. He cannot make me not pregnant.

“That’s impossible Mah and you know it”

“Mmmh”,she sips on her tea once more.

“Can...Can I talk to MaSibisi for a few minutes?” ,He steals a glance at me while he is talking to his mother.

“Ngeke ngikuvimbe vele usumnyobile(I won't stop you, you have already slept with her)”,I wish the ground can swallow me at that moment.

He sighs and then he walks through to the kitchen and I follow after him. We get in there and he turns to me and moves closer to me before he pulls me into his arms and heaves a deep sigh and I rest my head on his chest. Silence prevails between the both of us for a moment as we fall into comfortable silence.

“I love you so much”,he says.

“I am scared Mabutho. I am not ready and strong enough to face my consequences”

“You don't have to”,He says.

“Mmmh”

“I am sorry about Mandisa”,He says.

“You don't have to be”,I mean it. She has been here longer than I have.

“No I mean it and I am not going to shy away from my responsibilities with our child but I am choosing to be with you alone mama”

“But she is pregnant too Mabutho”,Out of wedlock too.

“I know. I will pay for the damages but I don't love her anymore”, I keep quiet.

He kisses my forehead after that and we let go of each other.

“I am sorry I made you cry”, He says.

“It's Okay”

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He cups my face and lays a perk on them of which turns into a short sweet kiss.

We break from the kiss and he smiles.

“You are so beautiful”, I blush and lightly giggle just to hide that I am blushing.

“Thank you Ntuli”

“I hope you are not making another baby in there!”, MaThabethe shouts.

Oh my soul this woman.

“Let's go and get some burgers”, I smile.

“I would like that.”

“Okay let me go and inform mah”, I nod as he leaves me in the kitchen as I wait for him.

_____ It was a bit of a challenge for MaThabethe to let us go together but she also didn't see the point of keeping me inside the house mainly keeping me away from Mabutho as the damage between us is already done. A part of me cannot believe that I am about to be a mother in just a few months time and also a part of me is scared. I think this situation would've been a bit better if I was not married to Mphembe but in this case I am married to Mphembe. I don't know how he would take this once he finds out that one of his wives had an affair with his son. MaGasa and MaKhumalo would be ecstatic to hear about my short coming as soon as these news reach their ears.

“MaBusi”

I am shaken out of the trans that I am in. Thoughts have been the only thing that has been consuming my mind for the past few hours since I had found out that I am pregnant with MaButho's child. Things are not going to be as easy from here on wards and I can feel it in my bones that things are going to turn as ugly as they can be.

I look at MaButho as he is looking at me waiting like he has said something while I was being lost

“What were you saying?”, I have to ask as I am really lost in this.

“What would you like to have?”, he asks with a calm voice.

My problems right now are bigger than having to choose what to eat.

“Anything is fine”

“Are you sure?”, he asks with a raised eye brow.

“Yes”, I faintly smile.

“Okay”, he turns to the lady who is by the window at the drive through. Soon enough he pays and we are going to the collection point.

We get our food and I thank him for it and quickly indulge in the burger. It has been so long since I had this amazing taste inside of my mouth. I turn to him and he smiles when he looks at me.

“You like it?”

I nod my head and go in for another bite of this burger. Soon we leave and he is driving wherever he is taking us. His phone rings and he takes it out of his pocket and stares at it before he puts it back where it was.

“Are you not going to answer that?”, I ask.

“No, it is not important”, I nod my head and carry on eating.

The ringing phone stops ringing and starts all over again and he looks at me.

“Answer it”

“It’s baba”, my body comes to a sudden halt. I look at him and my heart is beating fast just as he answers the phone call while he sighs.

“Mphembe”, he says and I keep quiet for a while. I try to read his expressions but they are not giving me much to work with. I just slowly carry on with what I am eating and he keeps quiet for a while before he sighs.

“Yebo baba”, he says and runs his fingers over his head.

He hangs up after that and he looks at me.

“Ubaba knows that you and mah are here and he said he is coming this afternoon”

“How did he know?”, that was rather too quick.

“My father can do anything if he wants to”

I just nod my head because I don’t know what to do or say.

“Should I get you some ice cream while at that?”, he asks.

“No, I just want to rest now”

“We can get a place for now where you can rest”

“And your parents”

“we will see the when we come back”, he says. I just nod.

“I just hope everything becomes okay”, I say and he nods then takes my hand into his.

“Everything will be okay”

“Your father knows that I am pregnant and he thinks it is his, the sangoma was called in to confirm and she said that it is a Ntuli child so everyone is assuming that”, I have to come clean to him.

“The truth will come out one way or the other. I know this is a sticky situation but we have to tell ubaba the truth”, he says and my heart skips a beat.

“I....”

He holds my cheeks and makes me look at him.

“Don’t worry I won’t turn my back on you”, he says.

I am really scared. I finish my food and he gets some ice cream for me before he goes to a near by BnB that we will rest our head there for now before we go home. We get inside and I throw myself on the bed and he joins me too after taking off his shoes. He kisses my nose and I giggle.

“MaButho that is not nice”

“It is, umuhle(you are beautiful) inside and outside Busisile”,he says.

“You too”, I start to yawn and close my eyes as he wraps his arms around me and kisses my cheek.

MANDISA

My father came and I have never felt so happy to see him in my life. I need to be home and cry in my mother’s arms first.

Mabutho can’t just do that to me. We have been through stuff together and I know I am not the best thing after sliced bread but atleast I love that man. It should count for something too.

My eyes are puffy as I get into my father’s car and he is driving home.

“Mandy are you okay princess?”, I shake my head.

I don’t want to cry in front of my dad. As much as I am comfortable around him but he would not understand.

“What is wrong?”

“I am just not okay”

“Do you want to talk to mom when you get home?”, I nod my head.

“Yes”

“Okay then”, I thank the lord that he didn’t push.

The drive going home was quiet silent. I just wish this car can fly so that I can be home on time.

MABUTHO

My bladder going through some pressure is what woke me up from the little nap that we were taking. I got up and Busisile was not next to me, she might be in the bathroom so I quickly got off the bed and called out for her while going to the bathroom.

“MaBusi, are you okay?”, silence prevailed the room.

I get to the bathroom and knock on the door and there is no answer. I open the door and get inside and there is no one there. I move from the bathroom and look around for her and even go outside calling for her but I can’t find her. It feels like it is a dream at this moment and I wish that it is or she shows up. I quickly rush to the reception and ask around about her and they tell me they will get the surveillance out for me after arguing my way of her being my pregnant partner.

We look through the camera's and I see her moving out of the gate and I quickly go back to the room we were using and I get my car keys and rush out to get inside my car and look for her. My phone rings and it is my mother. I ignore the call and put my phone on silence. I hope she has not gotten far.

BUSISILE

My heart is beating fast as I ran away from the room quiet quickly, I am not in the space of facing Mphembe and telling him how I have a child with his son. How I have been secretly loving his son for some time right now. I know that it seems like I am a coward at this point but a lot is going to come my way and it will not be the same for Mabutho so it is best that I leave.

I got a lift from some Van that was driving on the road by an old man that I don't know. He asked me where I am going and I just pointed the road ahead. The Maskandi music in the car cannot be missed. Even though it is the two of us but the noise is as if we are far away.

He keeps on having a sip off his nip and would close it and offer some to me though I have declined a few times.

“So where are you going?”, he asks.

“To the city”, I don’t even know which city he is going to.

“Oh I am going to Pietermaritzburg wena?”, he says.

“I am going there too”, I feel tears prickling my eyes.

“That is good then”, I keep my silence and look outside the window.

They will have to forgive me one day but for now I cannot face my outcomes.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 20

I look at this man who is dropping me off in a place that I am not for once familiar with. It is starting to get dark and I asked that he drops me off in an area that is atleast a bit safe for me. I know the decision that I have taken is impulsive but this to me seems a bit better than what I was about to face.

“Uhambe kahle mntanami”, the man says and I smile as he drives off leaving me in this place.

I start walking around and just stood by the robot and watched as the cars were moving back and forth from this place. I look for someone who has a phone so I can send atleast a message to Mabutho to tell him not to look for me but at the same time he might call the person to ask where I am and then he will come and fetch me. That I know. I sigh and I make my way across the robot and I find a spot on the pavement and I sit down. I feel like crying already and tears stream down my cheeks for a moment. A dirty girl sees me and she moves closer to me. She is not that dirty as you can still make out the color of her clothes.

“Hey, are you lost?”, she asks and I am scared to even answer.

“Trust me I wont hurt you”

“I am not lost, I ran away”

“How old are you?”, she asks.

“21 you?”, she smiles.

“I am 21 too, I have been on the streets for 3 days now.”

“Why?”

“I wasn’t able to register at the university system yet so now I am having problems and I don’t have a place to sleep. They stole my things too”, she giggles and I feel bad for her.

“I am sorry”

“It’s okay, I just hope that my father can make it to fetch me or something. I only have him in my life”

“I have no one”, at this moment I have no one.

“I am sorry for the loss”, she gives me some pity.

“My parents are alive, I just ran away from my marital problems”

“Trouble in paradise?”, I shake my head no.

“My husband is old”, she gasps and then little rain drops started coming down on us.

“Hey I know a spot where we can get some sleep. Come”, she says and we both go together.

“Where are you from?”, I ask.

“Deep parts of the eastern cape”, she says and I nod my head.

I can tell by her accent that she must speak deep isixhosa”

“I am iminathi by the way”

“Busisile”, we find a spot and we sit together. I feel so very bad for her.

She is a sweet lady too. I don’t know what I will do from here but I hope something comes up with time and I can get to taking care of my child. I wouldn’t want to loose him. I love him already.

“Where are white people’s houses from here?”, I ask.

“They are a distance why?”

“I want to look for a job”

“You might find it, they always looking for someone to clean up after them”, I nod my head.

We sit together and talk about anything to keep us busy from everything that us happening in our lives.

This is a new journey that I am about to embark on.

MABUTHO.

I feel like I am going crazy at the moment. I have called some of my friends who I know to be on the lookout for Mabusi. I am even afraid of going home and the sun has already set and my

parents have been calling me the whole day until I had to block them for a moment. I sigh as my car approaches the house and I feel hopeless, I cannot even report this to the police yet as I have to wait 24 hours before I report her missing. I get to park in front of the house and I can see my father's car and I sigh. I quickly turn off the ignition and I get out of the car and drag myself making my way inside and then I find my mother sitting on the couch with my father giving her a massage. Mphembe never does this but he has a very soft spot for my mother. Out of all his rural wives my mother is the only city girl from his wives that he loves so much. It must be how beautiful she is or how she is naturally. I always asked myself how my mother married such a rural man and agreed to being a wife amongst his other wives but I guess she loves him.

My mother gets her feet off Mphembe and makes her way towards me.

"We have been calling you Mabutho, where is Busisile?", she asks and I swallow.

"She...she ran away", I say and my father gets up from the couch.

"Ran away where Mabutho!?", my mother asks.

"I don't know, I...'", I don't even know what to say. I couldn't lie and say Busisile is somewhere when I don't know where she is

and if she is still alive wherever she is. Cold shivers go down my spine as I think of that.

“Don’t tell me that nonsense Mabutho how can Busisile run away when she was with you?”, I keep my silence.

My father looks at me and I shy away from his eyes.

“Where is my wife Mabutho?”, I felt myself cringe at him saying that.

“Baba I don’t know where Busisile ran off too but I am having people search for her”

“You better have my wife here tomorrow.”

I wonder where Busisile is and it is not giving me any ease. He walks away clicking his tongue seemingly he is angry. My mother looks at me and I look at her, I know what she wants to say but she is quiet.

“How can she run away? Mabutho we cant wait for tomorrow, we should go and look for her.”, she says with worry.

“Yebo ma”

“She is pregnant and this is all your doing. You should’ve left your father’s wife alone”, she whispers and sighs.

She turns and goes away to get her shoes. I am left there standing in the same spot with my head held down. She is right,

I shouldn't have gotten that close to Busisile but I couldn't help myself and we need to find her.

BUSISILE

The night seemed to be long but when morning arrived we were reminded that we are given a new day despite us having no shelter and also no proper cover too. Cold mornings are the worst and I am feeling its worst at the moment. Iminathi takes the cardboard we were resting on and she folds it.

"Come so we can go and try to get something to eat", she says.

She is very nice.

"Okay", I am not used to being in the city and also in have never went to the city alone.

The part of myself where I am scared is what is making me not even think of going back home. I am scared that my marriage has collapsed and I have brought shame not only to myself but everyone around me who loves me.

MaThabethe had trusted me with her son. Mandisa losing the father of her child while I too have cheated on my husband with his son.

As we are walking and crossing the street Iminathi pulls me and holds me by the hand as we cross the road and she turns to look at me.

“Are you okay?”, she asks and I nod.

“Yes I am okay”, I say and she nods.

She buldges her eyes and looks behind me.

“Look that man dropped his wallet”, she says and she pulls me as we are now rushing after the fallen wallet with another dirty guy behind us.

She takes it.

“Bring that wallet here”, the dirty guy says.

“Unganya apha kuthi, voetsek!”, she says.

“Yeyi wena slyvia”, the guy is ready to fight her.

She hands the wallet to me and I move back as she shoves the guy who slaps her and she kicks him. I have never fought in my life before. The way they are fighting I am scared and a lot of more dirty men come to try and access the situation.

“MaSibisi”, my heart beats fast when I hear that.

I turn around and it's Bongani. Two of some men who are with him go and help Iminathi out and he looks at me.

“What are you doing here Ncane?”, he says and I look down.

“I....I..”, I don't know what to say.

“That's my wallet”, he says and I hand it over to him shameful.

“Busi, who are these men?”, its iminathi.

“Who are you?”, Bongani asks.

“She..she is my friend”, I say looking between them.

“Cishe bakunyathela ntombazane, ungalwi namaphara(They almost beat you up girl, don’t fight with these street people)”

“They asked for it”, she says to one of the men who helped her.

“We are leaving, lets go”, Bongani says.

“I... I don’t want to leave”, I say softly and he frowns.

“Why?”

“I don’t want to face Mphembe or Mabutho”, the frown fades away.

He knows already. He cleared his throat.

“Let’s go”, he says once again and I look at iminathi.

“Do you know this man?”, she says coming to me.

“He is my husband’s son”, we are now following after these men.

“Kanti ineminyaka emingaphi igxhegu lakho?(How old is your man?)”, she asks.

“69 years”

“Haah Busisile, lomntu ngutato mkhulu wakho mos(That is your grandfather)”

“I know”, we reach the car and we are told to get inside.

The gentle men who were with him bid their goodbyes and leave.

He gets inside the car and we do so, we look at each other. He starts the car and he drives off.

I know I am a coward and so be it, I do not want to face my problems at the moment so it is best when things are like this.

This is the first time being in this city and it has been, well I don't know how to say it as it has only been a few hours since I came here and ran away from my marital problems.

I am seated on this bed and I am lost in thoughts, thoughts I don't know how I will come back out from.

Iminathi walks out of the bathroom with a towel wrapped around her body and she looks at me. We are in the main bedroom. Bongani said that we can use it as we would need some privacy.

“Yoh I don't remember the last time I took a proper bath. Do I smell like a boy?”, she says and I nod my head.

“Busi

I know we are not really friends and we have just met but I hope that things get better for you”, she says and I smile.

“I hope so”, they will not get better, I know that.

“Well let me get dressed, where are this man’s clothes that he laid out for us”, she says and I point to the bed.

She quickly goes and get’s dressed.

“I am taking this with me. I like these nike shorts”, she says and slips in Bongani’s shoes.

“Okay”, I don’t even know what to say.

“Don’t you want to talk to your husband?”, she asks.

“I am scared Nathi”

she sighs and comes to sit next to me.

“Maybe talking to him will help, the truth does set you free”, she says.

“I don’t know”

“You are a good girl who seems to have values, I am sure things will work out...”, a knock on the door disturbs our conversation.

“Can I come in?”, its Bongani.

“Yes!”, this girl says.

He walks into the room and he looks at us.

“I see you guys have freshened up”

“Thank you for...the little hospitality”, she says.

He nods his head.

“There is food in the kitchen, can I talk to Ncane a bit?”, my heart skips a beat.

“Oh okay”, she stands up and leaves me here.

“I just got a call from Ekhaya kuthiwa ulahlekile(They said you are lost)”, he says.

“I ran away”

“I know it is not my business but all of this has to do with my brother and father”

“ I am pregnant, with Mabutho’s and Mphembe doesn’t know yet, your mother knows as I told her. I... I don’t know how everything is going to pan out but it is best if I am away”

“You don’t want to face your consequences”

“Yes”

“Mmmmh”

“My brother and dad are losing their minds over you not being known where you are, face your consequences and die once”, he says.

“It is not easy”

“My mother understands that you are you but also you are naïve, You are very young to be tossed around like this and in this manner”, I close my eyes and feel tears streaming down my cheeks.

“Tell him, give my father the decency to know the truth just as you have told my mother”

“It is not easy”

“Life is never easy”, he says.

He turns and walks out of the door leaving me in the room crying. I rest on the bed. What am I going to do now? what has become of my life at the moment. I wish I didn't go to the reed dance this year, I wouldn't be in this situation.

I cannot blame anyone but myself.

.

He called them and they are all here. Mphembe, MaThabethe and his two sons. Iminathi is still here for a little bit but I heard Bongani say that they will go to the mall to go and get something to eat for everyone. I have been in this bedroom for

quiet a while and I do not even want to come out. I hear a knock on the door and it opens and MaThabethe walks in the room.

“Busisile mntanami”, she says.

“Ngiyaxolisa ma”, I say.

“This is very tough Busisile, we don’t know how things will pan out. I know you are scared but you are not alone”, I feel alone.

“Thank you”, I say.

“Should I call Mphembe in? he wants to see you. he couldn’t sleep last night worrying about you”, she says and I nod my head looking down.

“Okay, I will give you space”, she gets up and walks out of the room. A few minutes later Mphembe walks into the room.

“Mkami”, I swallow.

“Baba”, I stand up from the bed and stand on my feet facing down.

“What is the issue MaSibisi? Please tell me”, he says and I manage to find the courage to look at him.

“Please can you take a seat.”, I say and he comes and takes a seat on the bed.

I get down on my knees in front of him and I look down.

“Mphembe, I would first like to say I apologize, you took me from my home so that I can come and help expand your family name and I have disappointed you greatly in that”, I say.

“I love you MaSibisi, you haven’t disappointed me.”, he says and I swallow.

Tears form in my eyes.

“I...I have been having an affair with Mabutho behind your back and I ended up falling pregnant with his child”, I say.

“MaSibisi angikuzwa mina, uthini?(I don’t hear you, what are you saying?)”, he shifts on the bed coming closer.

“I had an affair with Mabutho baba, I am sorry”, I say.

“When did this start?”, he asks.

“I....its has been some time”, I say.

He gets off the bed and he goes and locks the door. I haven’t moved where I am.

“MaSibisi, ungilingelani kodwa mfazi!(Why are you doing this to me woman!)”, I am terrified.

“My son? He is your child too!”, he says.

“You and Mabutho will know me”, tears stream down my cheeks.

“That’s why you ran away?”, he asks.

“Yes”

I say shamelessly.

“I am not one to send my wives off or let them go away and study or get a job as I provide everything but I gave you a chance MaSibisi and you have greatly disappointed me”, he says and tears just stream down my cheeks.

“We are going to return home tomorrow”, he says and I nod my head.

“Yebo baba”, he looks at me for a while before he goes and Unlocks the door then he goes out closing the door.

The tears cannot stop streaming down my cheeks. I am afraid of what awaits for me at home. Soon the door opens and MaThabethe rushes inside and she comes towards me. She picks me up from the floor and hushes me.

“It’s okay, all will be well”, I nod my head.

“He didn’t do anything to you didn’t he?”, she asks.

“No, he did not”

she sighs.

“Thank God”, she says and looks at me.

“I am glad you are okay and he didn’t do anything to you”, she keeps on saying.

She caresses me just to soothe me.

“What... What will happen to Mabutho ma?”

“I don’t know, I cannot confirm that my child but I hope Mphembe comes to some reasoning. He can be short tempered and I am glad he didn’t do anything to you.”, she says and I sigh.

“You know he is old now and he cant keep up with you but people who are around your age can”

“Do you think he will send me back home?”

“I don’t think so. He will not do that”, she sounds so sure.

I chose to just keep my silence and let her speak further.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 21

MABUTHO

I spit the unflattering taste of blood from my mouth and wipe my lips before I look at him and the anger is quiet visible on his face. I don't blame him, I don't blame the fact that he is this angry. Mabusi is everything wanted in a woman that I have only wished to have but couldn't find until my father brought her sweet soul forth to my disposal.

My one hand on the cold tile as the blood droplets from my nose have surfaced there and so that in my mouth.

"Uyosinda ngonyoko mfana(you will be saved by your mother)", he loves her.

Both of them, MaSibisi and MaThabethe a bit too much too if you ask me.

"Baba you are 48 years older than Busisile, you are too old for her"

"I will kill you mfana!", he charges towards me and grabs the nearest item at bay and my mother shouts after her precious husband.

“Baba ngicela wehlise ulaka, abantwana laba(Please can you calm down, these are children)’, he doesn’t say anything. You don’t say anything when MaThabethe has spoken.

“Get up from the floor”, my mother says to me.

My father is still rooted at the same spot that he is in. I get a glimpse of MaBusi at the far corner trying to hide behind the wall to be unseen.

“Mphembe I know that these two have disappointed you greatly but being violent will not solve the problem. You promised you would stop”, she starts to do her famous weeping.

My father has not always been a soft person but rather known for being hard, he used to fight back in his days. Lead with an iron fist, that is why he has become the man he is today, my mother fell in love with the fighter man who was handsome before the grey hair came about. She raved about how he once was, that is why he has these many wives. He likes women too but he is all about family as it is already. Expanding the Ntuli name is something he wants more than anything even though he has a lot of children if it was up to him he would’ve had more children.

“I am angry MaThabethe”, she walks closer to him and lays her head on his chest.

The Durban girl has surfaced with these used to be foreign gestures to Mphembe.

She was the one who kissed him first when they got together and he was more surprised by that, but what do you expect from a girl who grew up in a place like Lamontville compared to one who grew up kwaNongoma.

“Kuzolunga baba”

“He is not getting my wife if he is thinking of that”, he says.

“But Mabusi is pregnant with my child baba, just let her go. I love her”

“Mabutho do not test me!”

“Mphembe and Mabutho”, I keep quiet as my mother warns.

He is quiet and so as I, I don't know what to say anymore but giving up on uMaBusi is not something I am going to do at the moment.

“Please, can I call Busisile so that we can talk about this before we leave and go home”

“There is nothing to talk about here KaMangethe, this boy needs to leave my wife”

“But baba can we sit down and let's talk”, he huffs.

She leaves the room and she comes back after some time with Busisile who has her head bowed as she walks in. the relief of seeing her washes over me at that moment as I watch over her.

We get to settle and my mother is seated on the couch and Mabusi too though she first aimed for the floor.

My mother is a modern woman who married an ancient man, MaBusi also has traditional morals that she instills in her everyday life.

“Go and clean yourself up MaButho”, my mother mentions.

“He is not going anywhere, I am not done with him”

“It is not his fault Mphembe, yimi obesephutheni.(I am the one at fault here) he didn’t force anything upon me and I am the one who willingly gave myself up to him of which I know I shouldn’t have done unto any man but you. I know I have created a great crime unto the Ntuli yards, family and their ancestors and that is why I seek that any punishment you have for me I will take it as it comes”

“I want Mabutho to stay away from you”, MaThebethe sighs.

“I don’t think this conversation will go anywhere today”

Silence prevails the room. My mother is loosing a bit of hope at the moment.

NARRATED

Mphembe has always been known to hold one of the largest family in his area and he has kept to that. He vowed that his family name would grow and he has married for stability and also for love, love being MaThabethe and the new child Busisile. Yes he knows that she is young but that is what he likes, it kind of reminds him of the young Bathabile Thabethe and MaJili as well. He loves it, it takes him back to the days he used to travel to Durban back and forth and the days where he used to be still active and strong willed and not so very frail as he seems like now. Old age has caught up with him and he did let himself go but he cannot let the age get to him, he still wants to feel that fresh taste of being young and in love and he loves it.

There is no denying it

Advertisement

he does have a soft spot for MaThabethe and also Busisile the most and many of his other wives.

There is never enough for him while he is still alive, that is why expanding his home will forever be in consideration despite him being old. He will do it until he takes his last breath.

He loves the gentleness that Busisile has and the calm aura she possesses, she is not much feisty like the MaThabethe can be at

times when they are alone, she knows how to tame him and he knows not to overstep when it comes to his city woman.

He is angry, angry that all of this happened under his nose and the fact that his son enjoyed parts of it, its clear to him because he didn't come to report that his youngest wife is seducing him but kept quiet and enjoyed savouring his wife until he deposited his sperm.

He has nothing against he unborn child. It is as much as his, afterall it is a Ntuli.

He doesn't know what to do at this moment but all he knows is that he is greatly disappointed in Busisile and Mabutho.

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On the other hand, Iminathi has been able to get in touch with her father who has deemed to try and find some money to get her back home.

He doesn't care if his daughter returns with the issues going on with the university but he is happy to have heard from his daughter after some time of not being able to reach her.

Here they are now waiting at the food court for some Pizza's and burgers ordered from Steers and it's neighbour Debonairs.

"The orders are taking a bit long", she complains without putting into thought of what she is saying.

Yes it is a bit packed at the food court, they are not even seated at all.

“So how did you become Busisile’s step son?”, she asks.

She is curious, she saw the man and he is old in her defence.

“She got married to my father”, Bongani mentions.

She gets that she will not receive the full information, even Busisile seems to not want to spill the beans too.

“You know you don’t have to seem uptight about life, you seem like a tight one”, she says and he frowns.

“Uchaze ukuthini mama(what do you mean mama?)”

“Ndiqond’ba u-uptight man awuncokoli nokuncokolo nami undibuze ba iweather injani though ndiyazi injani(I mean you are uptight man you are not even talking to me and asking how the weather is like even though I know how it is like)”

“I don’t know what to say”

“Usually Zulu men have things to say”, she rolls her eyes shying away from his gaze.

“I don’t like that”, he mentions turning fully to her.

The longest conversation they have had since they started talking to each other.

“What?”

“That eye roll thing”

“Okay?”, she shrugs her shoulders.

“Owakephi ntokazi?(Where are you from?)”

“Ndingowase maqaqasini(I am from somewhere far)”, she mentions.

He won't know any place besides Mthatha in the Eastern Cape.

“Mmmh”, he goes to being silent again.

His cell phone rings and he excuses himself before he attends to it.

BUSISILE

I kept on staring at the ceiling not knowing what is coming next for me. Mphembe is more than furious and I do not blame him, I know what awaits for me are the hurls of names that will come from the family. I should've seen a child in Mabutho though he is older than me but I should view each and every one of Mphembe's children like my very own. I turn my head as I look at the snoring Iminathi, she is really in her sleep and I guess it must also come with the comfort of this bed.

As I am laid on my back I place my hand on my stomach and I sigh and breathe in and out. I get that everything seems a bit shaky but my thoughts right now are on this child that is inside of me.

I look at the lady next to me and try to not wake her up while getting out of the bed. I want to use the bathroom so I open the bedroom door. Mphembe is sharing a room with MaThabethe and Mabutho disappeared with his brother. I go to the bathroom and I do what I need to do before I get out after I am done. I move to where my room is and I feel someone holding my arm and I jump in fright.

“Shh its me”, Mabutho says.

Standing in front of me nearly naked but in his bottoms.

“Mabutho”

He leads us in the room and closes the door behind him. The snoring princess is still at it.

“How are you baby? Are you okay?”, he asks and I feel like crying.

“I am going to be okay, how are you? your face?”

“I will survive”, he says and pulls me into a warm hug.

“I love you and we will get through this”

“He is angry at us”

“I know but we will be okay”, I nod my head.

“Is your friend a heavy sleeper?”

“No, she is just resting. She hasn’t slept properly in days”, I say.

“Why?”

“She got stranded here, university stuff and she is not from Kzn”

“Mmmh, okay”, he gives me a kiss and holds my cheeks.

“I love you so much Mabusi, don’t forget that”

“I love you too”, I say. ‘he gives me the last kiss before he departs from my room.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 22

The morning came rather too soon in a space that I don't even want to face Mphembe as I am scared. I know that soon we will be leaving going back home and I am scared of what awaits me. I am even afraid of moving out of this room and I took an early bath before everyone else woke up and when Iminathi got to wake up I was already done with bathing.

I am seated on the bed staring outside the window, the curtain is flapping up and down due to the wind and it has me in some trance. I am alone in the room after the begging that iminathi had done just to get me out of this room but it all fell deaf to ears.

I sigh as I rub my hands together. I know that Mphembe might be angry that I haven't availed myself. It is disrespectful what I am doing but I cant find myself walking out of this door and going to fill duties that I don't know how to anymore. I don't feel lost, just scared. I love Mabutho, I love how he makes me feel and makes my blood rush at times. I love when he pulls me closer to him and gives me a small kiss on the temple of my head and tells me that he loves me while he looks at me. I love, I love a man that was once in love with another woman. I close my eyes and sigh, a knock on the door surfaces and I turn my head and watch in the direction where the knock is coming

from. Another one surfaces once again before the door opens and MaThabethe peaks in her head and she lets herself in without me saying a word.

“Why are you sitting here, food is ready”, she says.

“I am fine thank you ma”, she sighs and comes closer.

“You have to eat Busisile, you are carrying a something in you and it needs to be fed.”

“I am fine, thank you ma”

“Everything will be okay, Mphembe will calm down about everything”

I keep my silence. I am just worried about Mabutho in all of this more than I am. I wonder how far I would’ve gotten if I ran away as far as I could.

“You know you are going to be a mother pretty soon and that comes with putting your child and yourself first”, she says.

“Have you ever done that?”, I ask curious.

“Yes, many times, I have put myself and my kids first more than my husband”

“What about your family?”

“If it’s the family who sticks beside you in happiness and sadness then yes”

I sigh and she keeps her silence for a moment.

“What do you wish, more than anything?”

I wish I was given the freedom just once in my life.

“I cant wish much”

“You can”

“Wishes never come true”, I say.

“Let me go, I will send someone to bring the food to you”, I nod my head and thank her.

She moves away from me and she makes her way towards the door, she opens it and walks out.

I carry on where I left off with the staring and then the door opens and I turn back, it is Mphembe. I get off the bed quickly and bow my head.

“Baba”, I greet softly and there is silence between the both of us.

“MaSibisi”, he finally says and I nod my head.

He walks in further into the room and I swallow.

“Why are you locking yourself in here?”

“I...I am not well”, I lie.

I learnt that, it is something I don't usually do.

“Do you need to go to the doctor?”

“No, I will be fine, thank you”, silence prevails between the both of us.

“Do you love Mabutho?”

he asks and I swallow.

“I...I...”, I don't know how to answer him in a gentle manner.

“Be honest”

“Yes”

“What do I not do for you?”, I get the courage to look up to him and he is staring back at me.

His facial expression shows that he wants to know what is going on.

“There is nothing you do not do for me?”

“Is it because I am not as young as Mabutho?”

“Yes”, I say honestly and he clenches his jaw.

“I feared this would happen but I trusted you Busisile, what is everyone going to say? The other wives? The whole community about this shame”

“I am sorry Mphembe”

“You are not , both of you as you are only because I now know”, he says coming closer to me and I move back.

“I am sorry Mphembe, it was never my intention to hurt you”, I quickly say.

He is hurt but also he is angry and I do understand where he is coming from.

NARRATED

The breakfast is eaten with no silence in place. Iminathi and MaThabethe are chatting up a storm while Bongani is seated with Mabutho who’s mind is in the other room where his father vanished to. In there with Busisile. He wishes to come close there and hear what is being said and done but he holds himself from trying to jump off this couch and go in there. They are not carrying any conversation just company and great food.

A laughter gets Bongani’s attention and it is of a woman who he just met the previous day. She is talkative were his thoughts. She is just too much for him, the fact that she rolls her eyes and is able to talk back to him for his silence just rubs him off the wrong way, even the laughter he doesn’t like it.

He has heard a lot about Xhosa women, beautiful and loud and also one of the female creatures who are considered to be real mean fighters.

The beauty and loudness has been proven from him and also the fighting. He has experienced that first hand from this woman.

“Mama enkosi for the breakfast ibimandi(It was nice)”, the loud woman says.

He thinks as he looks in the direction of his mother and Nathi.

“The pleasure is mine, you should visit us in the rural area. I am sure Busisile will like it”

“I would love to!”

The thoughts are running wild in his head. Why is his mother inviting a stranger in their home. Yes she is a nice person but that doesn't give her the right to invite a stranger in their family yard.

A cry gets everyone's attention and Mabutho is the first to leave the room rushing to where Mphembe and Mabusi are in. He gets in the room and Mphembe is not having any mercy on Busisile's body as she apologizes, he is angry and hurt. Mabutho pulls his father back and pushes him off Mabusi who is crying curled up near the floor as she keeps on apologizing.

“Ndumezulu!”, MaThabethe's anger shoots up as she sees the sight.

She has never experienced this but some other wives have and she once left this man for it. He begged her and it took over a year for her to come back into his arms once again after promising that he will never be a violent person towards a woman but he failed to keep his promise.

“Mabutho step away Mfana before I hurt you”

“Hurt me? Baba you are hurting the mother of my child and you think I will just let you carry on. I will not! The one who is in the wrong about this whole situation is you marrying a child ! dont even play victim you saw this coming”, he is also angry.

He pulls the weeping Busisile who has felt numb. The slap was unexpected so as the hands that were thrown in her direction.

She holds on tightly to Mabutho, scared is the word.

He pulls her out of the room and he pulls her out of the house going to his car. They are leaving and it is final too.

Mean while MaThabethe was still in disbelief of what this man has done.

“Are you happy now?”

“Don’t...”

“Don’t what Ndumezulu?! I cant look at you right now”, she clicks her tongue and walks away.

.

Bongani had pulled Iminathi away from the family drama, strangers should not be in their business.

“Where are you taking me?”

“Outside”

“Hey they are hitting my friend in there. Your old father is crap”, she clicks her tongue.

“You don’t talk like that and you don’t know Busisile”

“All I know is that she great dick over wrinkled dick”, she says.

He cannot figure her out.

“Are you always like this?”, he says.

“Like what?”

“You talk too much”

“I know”

He would not be able to crack this woman well.

MABUTHO

We have been on the road for quiet some time and she has been crying and sniffing since we left, my mother has called and I only answered her for a brief moment before I hung up on her. I took Mabusi to the doctor and the doctor assured me

that everything is okay. She is in her critical stage though. I need to call Mandisa and also see what she needs, as much as we are not together anymore but she is pregnant with my first born child and I also need to be there for her.

“MaSibisi”

She turns and looks at me and her eyes are red, they are puffy and if she was light skinned she would’ve been red at this moment.

“I am sorry”, I say.

I feel like all of this is my fault. I approached her.

She light smiles in my direction and she sniffs.

“It is not your fault”

“I will not leave your sight okay?”, she nods her head.

I park the car at the side of the road and pull her in for a hug and she holds onto me.

“Everything will be okay”, I brush her back as I say so.

She starts sobbing again and I keep on caressing her.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 23

I have rested and my body is quiet aching as well, Mabutho has his hands wrapped securely around me, I guess he doesn't want me to run or leave while he is still resting, I look at this man who is sleeping next to me and I run my hands on his face admiring his features, he slowly opens his eyes and looks at me and I return the favour and look at him. we don't stop the staring contest between the both of us. He smiles and then he pulls me to kiss my forehead and I close my eyes.

"How are you feeling?", he asks.

"Okay", I quickly say.

"Are you sure?"

"Yes, my body is aching a bit but it is nothing that I cannot handle at the moment.

I say honestly. He nods his head and he caresses my arm.

"I have been thinking of going to the doctors appointment tomorrow with Mandisa", he says and looks at me.

"It's okay, you are having a child together", he sighs.

"Thank you", I nod my head.

"Now what?"

“I don’t know but I am not letting us go”

“I am not doing that either”

“Are you hungry?”

“Yes please”, he nods and he gets out of the bed and then I also do the same. I ask for the bathroom and he shows it to me while he tries to get food for us. I do what I need to do and I wipe myself and there are little drops of blood on my tissue and the doctor did mention that having a small bleed is normal when you are about to have a baby, it does happen at times.

I flush and wash my hands before I walk out of the bathroom.

Mabutho is on the phone and he seems to be talking someone and I do not interfere in his conversation as it does not involve me at all.

I sit on the bed waiting for him to finish with his call and he does in time.

“That was umah, she is just checking up on us”

“We cant rush away, I understand why your father is angry”

“But that doesn’t give him the right to hit you”

“Mabutho we cant question an elder”

“Are you hearing yourself Busisile?”

“Yes”

He shakes his head.

“Mabutho he is angry and I understand that”

“I do too but his actions shouldn’t be justified not by you especially”, he says and I keep my silence.

“Food is on its way”, he says and goes to the bathroom leaving me in the room. I sigh and cover my face.

.

The days have passed by quite quickly and all that has been going on is the back and forth about the pregnancy, we haven’t seen Mphembe since the day I was punished for my sins and Mabutho hasn’t been wanting to see his father as yet after all of that. I also am scared of talking to Mphembe but sooner or later we would have to face him and learn how to bury the hatchet that is there between all of us. So here we are, today going to the Ntuli homestead. I am nervous, I have never been this nervous and I know that some of the wives most probably already know what I have done with Mabutho. He has been quiet since we left where we were coming here and he hasn’t said anything about what awaits us here. we keeps our silence until we enter the yard. He breathes in and out and gives me a assurance that he is here and that everything will be okay. It does give me some assurance in that.

We get out of the car and make our way inside the yard and I see MaGasa standing by the verander and she places her hands on her hips. The kids greet Mabutho and I and I greet them back. I have not seen them since I ran away.

“Heeh indodakazi yolahleko noma ngithi umfazi wolahleko(The prodigal daughter or should I say the prodigal wife)”, she says and looks at me while I shy away from her.

“Sawubona ma”, Mabutho greets.

“Yah Butho”

“Ubaba ukhona?”

“Ulele(He is asleep)”.

“Where is he sleeping?”

“I will wake him up”, she says and walks away from us.

We share a look before we make our way inside the house. MaJili is in the kitchen and she greets us.

Mabutho asks about his mother and MaJili tells him that she is in her room. We wait on MaGasa and she comes back.

“He said he would like to see MaSibisi alone”

“She is not going there alone”, she frowns and claps her hands.m

“Why?”

“Let’s go”,Mabutho says.

“Heeh imihlola ke le!”, MaGasa says.

“Mabutho please”

“No Busisile!”

“Haibo Mabutho ubiza umawakho ngegama?(Mabutho are you calling your mother by her name?)”,MaGasa keeps on speaking.

“Please”

“I will accompany you”, I sigh and nod my head.

We leave MaGasa there and go to the main room of which is MaKhumalo’s room. We knock and Mabutho looks at me. I sigh and make my way inside the room and he follows, I see Mphembe seated in the bed with the little flat screen tv on. He looks at my direction and he doesn’t look okay.

“Baba”

“Ngicela usondele MaSibisi(Please come closer MaSibisi)”, he says.

“I am scared baba”, I say honestly and he sighs.

“I will not lay my hands on you”, he says and I move forward a little bit and stand just before the front of the bed.

“I just want us to talk”, he says.

I just keep my silence.

“It is hard for me to accept this but I have been pulled by the ear”, he says and I still keep my silence.

“I am prepared to raise the child but I am letting you go and so as Mabutho”, he says.

“Letting go of what Mphembe?”, Mabutho asks.

“I am letting go of you both in this family”

“You are disowning us?”, my heart skips a beat.

“Yes, seeing you both disgusts me”

“I don’t trust you both and you with my life anymore”

Mphembe says.

“Please baba, any punishment but that”, I say.

Mabutho keeps his silence.

“Please, I am giving you a few days to leave everything that you inherited from me for my kids”, he says.

“Mphembe if we are cutting ties now we are cutting ties forever”, Mabutho says.

Mphembe keeps quiet for a while.

“Send a message to me when you have left”, he says and Mabutho takes my hand in his and pulls me out of the room.

“Mabutho you cant abandon your family like that”

“Watch me Mabusi”, he says and he opens the car and gets me inside. I see MaKhumalo and the other wives gossiping while watching us from the verander. He closes the door on my side while I am inside and then he gets inside his side and he starts the car before he drives off. I keep my silence that moment and he drives out of his family yard. I keep on looking back as the dusts starts to get stronger and stronger as the house fades and the yard disappears into thin air. My heart aches, my heart aches for him the most.

I turn and look at this man and he is angry, I am scared of even trying to talk him out of this as he will not change his mind.

“Mabutho”, I say and he looks at me.

“Is this all worth it?”

“For my happiness yes Mabusi”, he says.

I nod my head that moment.

NARRATED

As the dust seems to settle on the other side, in the Ntuli household the wives hold a conversation with MaGasa dishing out the glimpse drama that she saw between Mabutho and Busisile.

“Za came to me the other day and saw MaSibisi going in his room”, MaKhumalo dishes out her news too adding on the news they are hearing,

“Maybe she is pregnant with his child not Mphembe’s”, the news are dished some more.

“We should ask MaThabethe, she knows something from her bestfriend and son”, MaKhumalo says.

She shakes her head. Why did she have to sleep and witness the ending action?

But it was not over yet for them. The suitcases roll through the green grass and they turn their heads seeing MaThabethe in a white dress that deems to express her being a fresh woman. The lights flicker in one of Mphembe’s cars that she loves the most. The Audi Q7. She was the one who made him choose that car while MaKhumalo wanted Mphembe to buy the Avanza for her many children. They all had a chance to select a car they wanted Mphembe to buy so that he can drive around with them and the city girl wanted the top of the class range SUV. It has only been a year since Mphembe bought this car and he enjoys it too. He was skeptical bringing such a car in the rural area for it didn’t fit here but you cannot take the city out of a person.

The lights flicker and the boot is soon open and she shoves her two suitcases.

“Haibo Sisi where are you going?!” ,MaKhumalo asks.

MaThabethe ignores.

She places all her things inside. She has her sun hat on and her sandals topped with the dress she is wearing. She opens the front door and already one of the wives has informed Mphembe with the departure.

“Bathabile”, he gets over to the driver’s side as he knocks on the window.

She rolls the window down and looks at this man.

“Where are you going?”

“I am going far away from you, I won’t stay for a man who beats women”, his heart skips a beat.

He promised and vowed to himself that he would never do that again as he never wanted to loose her and now he is loosing her.

“Mama, ngicela sikhulume(Mama can we please talk?)”, he says.

“There is nothing to talk about Mphembe, act as an example”, she says and she starts reversing the car.

It is also helpful that this car is an automatic as she hasn't driven in some time. Being driven around has been a luxury to him. Yes the others don't deserve the car that she is leaving with, they chose the cars they wanted to travel in with their husbands so this is her car.

The dusts settles after the car disappears through the dust and Mphembe feels heavy hearted.

"Baba ukahle?(Baba are you okay?)", one of the wives asks.

"I need to rest"

"I will send the kids with your food and water", he ignores and he walks away going into the main room.

MANDISA

"I hope it is a boy", my mother says and I smile.

"Me too, I am going to a doctor's appointment with Mabutho later on", I quickly say.

"How are you feeling?", she turns to me from the sink and I sigh.

"I am sad mah, I love this man"

"Maybe you should sit down with him and try to find a way to talk through this", she says.

"I have been trying"

“Maybe instead of fighting you should try again”, this is hard honestly.

“Okay”, she smiles and drinks her water.

“Let me go and get some work done okay?”, I nod my head and send a message to Mabutho reminding him of our doctors appointment. I didn’t expect to be pregnant but I am happy the baby is here, I hope it brings us closer and closer.

I place my hand on my stomach and rub it gently.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 24

I had fallen asleep as the drive was a bit long but when I wake up I am in the bedroom in the farm house and I am hearing some moving sounds. The darkness that is displayed in front of me as the curtains are not closed from inside the house. It indicates that it is night time now. I sit up from the bed and I stretch myself and I see the boxes and also about 2 suitcases that are packed. This is Mabutho's room, there is no doubt about that. I slowly get out of the bed and I make my way to where the moving sounds are coming from and Mabutho is in the closet. It is almost empty.

He turns to me and he smiles.

"Hey"

"Hi, what are you doing?"

"I am packing our things before we leave"

"Do you need help?", I ask.

"I have got this baby, the chef came and I told him to make something for you"

"So you are leaving everything?", he nods his head.

"Yes"

“Where to from here?”, I think out loud.

He comes towards me and he holds me close to him.

“Do not worry about anything okay?”, I nod my head.

He kisses my forehead.

“Let’s go and eat”

“I am not hungry yet, we can finish up here”, I say.

“Okay, only for 20 minutes then we go and eat”, he says and I nod my head.

“That is fine by me”, we get on with packing the rest of the things and mostly are his things more than mine. What I have here are the clothes he got for me and I like them, I hope with time I will still fit in them.

After 20 minutes we leave what is left and we go and eat our food. We sit on the couch together and we speak about anything that comes into our minds and speak about my experience in the farm to. We are laughing and enjoying each other’s company and soon we go and wash our dishes and Mabutho tells me that we will finish the rest of the things in the morning. We get to his room and I go and take a shower with him and he gets to wash my body and after we are done with bathing we get out of the shower and go and get dressed

before we slip into bed and carry on with our conversation from where we left it off until I doze off once again.

BONGANI

My mother would've bite my head off if I had thrown this woman out and when everyone else left it was just awkward. She doesn't like silence that is one thing I have noticed but I am glad that her varsity issues are getting sorted. I had to pull some strings so that things can speed up and she can leave, a few phone calls made that possible for me. It was either that or I am stuck with her until God knows when.

I am getting ready for work, I tried to call Mabutho to figure out how he is doing and I called my older brother Phumlani and we have decided that we should go and see Mabutho and be there for him. Dad did see this coming, MaSibisi is very young so she would find someone who is young attractive too but it is not her fault though, Mabutho wanted her first so he has to take care of the mess that this girl is in. I am preparing for work and I am almost done with doing my tie when my phone rings and I take it off from my bed and it is Nkosinathi. I thought marriage and his new company is holding him down for some time.

I quickly answer the call.

“Bafo”, I say.

“Bafo, kuhamba kanjani ?(How are things going Bhuti?)”

“They are going okay”

“Mmmh, I was talking to umah izolo and she told me things”

“What things?”, I frown.

“Its a lot, about Mabutho and MaSibisi, apparently Mphembe ubaxoshile and uMaThabethe left as well”,What?!

“What is going on?”, he asks.

“Mabutho umithisile uMaSibisi(Mabutho impregnated MaSibisi)”

“Why is baba not calling everyone on this matter than to take decisions on his own?”

“I don’t know”

“Let me call Mabutho and check how he is”

“Okay”, he hangs up after that.

I quickly try my mother and it rings a few times before she answers.

“Mfana wami”

“Mama where are you?”

“I am at home, why?”

“In Lamont?”

“Yes, why?”

“So you left home?Nkosinathi just called”

“MaKhumalo likes talking, she gossips even with her sons”

“You didn’t want us to know?”

“It’s not like I am dying Bongani hayi, how is Iminathi? I hope you are treating that girl well”

“I am trying my best”

“Mmmh”

“I will see you in a few”

“Haibo go to work”

“But ma”

“I am being serious”

“I cant get to Mabutho”

“I will try Busisile”

“Okay”

“Bye”

“I love you ma”

“Ayi Bongani ibani nentombi nithi I love you kubona(Ayi Bongani have a girlfriend you will say I love you to)”, I shake my head.

“Okay”

“Bye mfana wami”, she hangs up.

I don't know how I ended up having such a mother but no one is like her.

I get out of my room when I am done and I find this woman frying in the kitchen and she has a towel wrapped around her body.

I clear my throat and she looks at me.

“Good morning”

“Morning”

“I am making breakfast, do you want some?”

“Izinto zabelungu azisuthisi(White people food don't satisfy me)”, I say as I watch her having sliced avocardo and toasted bread too and its two slices.

“Can you just sit down and stop being indoda you will faint at work”, she says.

I find myself not arguing with her and I go and sit down in the living room and I pull the remote and open the news as I wait

for whatever breakfast that she has. She comes after some time with a tray and she places it in front of me. I look at the presentation, it is not messy and the coffee is hot.

“The coffee has no sugar, do you need it and milk?”

“No thank you”, I say looking at her.

“Okay then”

“Can I have 4 more slices of bread?”, I say looking at the two slices of toasted bread.

“Yoh okay”, she moves away from me and she comes back with the bread and I thank her.

“Please get dressed”

“I am covered”

“Iminathi”, I warn and she raises her hands.

“Ndiyakuva, I will do it”. I nod my head she walks off.

I breathe out and I run my fingers over my face before I start eating the food that is in front of me.

MABUTHO

I sent a message to Mphembe telling him that we have left his place, the car is filled with our things and a sleepy Busisile, I look at this woman and I run my fingers on her face before I let her be. I sigh as I am consumed in thoughts. So this is a new

start. I have some money that I have in my savings and some in my investment account and I don't want to touch that but for now we need a place to stay and hopefully we will get one very quickly. I am driving to Durban. My phone rings, I had it off the whole of yesterday and sometime this morning. I answer it.

"Hello"

"Butho, its Nkosinathi", I swallow.

"Bhuti"

"How are you?", I sigh before I answer.

"I am good and yourself?"

"I am okay", silence prevails between the both of us.

"I heard the news"

"Ohw"

"What are your plans? This needs to be fixed"

"I will not fix anything, I love Busisile and we are expecting. We apologized to baba and we were willing to try and get forgiveness but he disowned us so that I am not going to entertain", I say.

"But we are family, we need to find some way"

“Your father has made up his mind and even if he changes it, mina no Busisile angasifaki(He shouldn’t involve me and Busisile)”

“I hear you but family is everything”

“I am not disputing that, that’s why I should protect my family. I am not mad at anyone but me and Mphembe have cut ties”, I say.

“Where are you?”

“I am on my way to Durban”

“You left the farm house?”

“Mphembe said I should leave everything for his children”

“I will talk to him”

“Don’t, I don’t want to be associated with his selfish self”

“Your mother left home too”

“Good,did he tell you that he laid his hands on Busisile?”

“What?!”, I feel myself boiling at the thought.

“I will have a word with him”

“Don’t, he wont listen. I will call you when I have settled”, I say.

“Okay, if you need anything call me”

My phone indicates that there is an incoming call”

“Okay”

We hang up and I answer the other call.

“Mandisa”, I scratch my head.

“Mabutho you didn’t call me to tell me what is going on and your phone wasn’t reachable”

“I am sorry, I am going through something, can we schedule for 2 hours from now”

“Okay, we need to talk. Keep your phone on and don’t stand me up”

“I will not, I promise”

“Okay”

I hang up after that. I turn to Busisile and pull the little fleece that is on her up a bit so that she is fully covered.

I love this woman and the day I vowed to love her is the day I vowed to go through the hottest flames with her and I am prepared for that.

BUSISILE

We are in a place where MaThabethe was born in. Mabutho told me that he has to go to his appointment with Mandisa and

I understood. He is the father of her child and he has to be there as much as he is for our child. This house is beautiful

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it is a double story and it is modernised. There is a double garage that has a door that leads from there into the kitchen. I didn't know that MaThabethe has a sister and also a brother but what I know is that her brother is married and her sister has never been married but she has two daughters of which one lives in another province while the other is doing her final year in university. It seems like she comes from a really great family if you ask me.

"Do you want a foot massage Busi?", her sister asks me as she has already fed me until my stomach hurts.

"No, thank you ma"

"There is a massage chair you can sit on", she says.

"Haibo Thobile why are you panicking? She does that when someone is pregnant", MaThabethe says.

"This is our first grandchild Batha", her sister reasons.

"Haibo Mthoko has a child"

"That we hardly see", she says.

“Busi if you need something just call me okay”, MaThabethet sits next to me.

“How are you feeling my child?”

“I am feeling okay mah, thank you”

“You know, I know this is not how you imagined things to happen but I am happy that Mabutho is here with you”, I smile.

“Are you not hating me?”

“Why should I?”

“I sneaked around with your son”

“You are young Busisile, we all make mistakes and yours came with a valid reasoning, I am not justifying you cheating but what I mean is that you are young and you were obliged to be attracted to someone who is in your age group or young”

“I hear you mah and I am sorry”

she pulls me in for a hug.

“It is okay baby”, she rubs my back and I feel comforted too.

“I am making fruit salad!”, her sister says from the kitchen.

“Thobile awuhlale phansi soqhuma!(Thobile sit down we will explode!)”

“Does she like cooking?”, I ask.

“Yes, she used to be a chef at the biggest hotel in her life”

“Wow”

“I also used to be something once, before I met Mphembe”, she says and smiles.

“Do you love Mphembe?”

“Yes I do, I don’t think that will change anytime but I hate his actions”, I nod my head.

“I hear you”

“And do you love Mabutho?”, I giggle and shy away.

“I have my answer.”, she laughs at me.

Her sister shows up with a tray with juice and bowls.

“Here is something to nibble on”

“Kodwa Thobile”, MaThabethe says.

“Thank you ma”, I say.

“I love this one”, she says and walks away.

I don’t think I can stomach anything at the moment.

MANDISA

He came , he actually showed up. The car got parked in front of my gate and I quickly go to the car and he gets out and opens

the door for me. The chivery is there. I thank him and he closes the door and gets inside the car and he drives off.

“Sorry I am late, I had to sort something out”, he mentions. S

“It’s okay, I hope you are good”, I say.

“I am good, I hope you are too”

“I am trying”, he keeps his silence and I sigh.

“Mabutho can we talk?”, I say.

“Okay”, he rests his body on the seats.

“What happened to us? I thought we were happy”

“We were happy Mandisa”

“Then why are we splitting up? What did I do wrong?”

“You didn’t do anything wrong Mandisa, I care about you and I loved you and I was prepared to spend the rest of my life with you...”

“Then?”

“Then I felt like you didn’t complete me. Yes loving a person is one thing but feeling complete is what I wanted. I didn’t feel as complete with you, something was missing and I didn’t want to string you along so I thought we should end things”, I feel a lump in my throat.

“Who is she?”, I ask and he keeps quiet.

“Can we forget this conversation?”

“No who is she Mabutho!?”

“Busisile”

“Who ? that Step mother of yours?”, I don’t think I heard him properly.

“She is my woman”

“Ukhohlakele!(You are evil!)”, I turn away from him and tears stream down my cheek.

“I am sorry Mandisa”

“How could you do that to me?”

“It just happened”

“Is it because I am from the city?”

“No”

“Then what? I am not dark and skinny like her?”

“Mandisa don’t do that”

“What?! Huh? You have hurt me Mabutho”

“I am sorry”, I sob.

He lets me be and the ride to the doctor is filled with my sobs. I cannot believe that he did this to me, I was assured that he would not cheat on me with his step mother and he goes and does that. I shouldn't have allowed that girl next to my man.

We get to the doctor and he parks the car.

"I hope she receives every bad thing", I say and take off my seat belt .

"Take that back Mandisa", his tone is warning.

"I won't!"

I open the door and he pulls me from getting out.

"I am warning you Mandisa you don't want us to fight"

"Leave me alone"

"Don't you ever wish bad things upon Mabusi, I am the one who wronged you not her don't piss me off now take that back before we fight", I swallow. He has never spoken to me in that manner.

"I am sorry"

He lets me go and I get out of the car. My arms hurt a bit. He gets out too and he closes the door. I cant believe this man has done this to me all for that girl.

IMINATHI

“Ndiyavuya ukuva lokho mntanami(I am happy to hear that my child)”, my father says.

I am seated outside on the verander.

“Ewe tata, I am just waiting to move and ndifumane i-allowance so that I can buy some things”

“Oh uyehova mntanami akanokusilahla (God never forsakes us)”, I am just happy that my school issues are getting sorted.

The electric gate opens as I am seated on the verander and a car I do not know drives in.

“Tata, I will call you later yeva?”

“Okay, ndiyakuthanda mntanami(I love you my child)

“Uthandwa ndim(You are loved by me)”

We hang up and I get up from the floor and a man comes out of the car and he looks at me.

“Sawubona sisi”

“Hello”, he gets out and closes the door behind him.

“I am here for my brother”

“Who is your brother?”

“Bongani”, he chuckles after.

“Oh,he is not here. he left for work”

“He is on his way I guess, I called him”

“Okay would you like some juice while you wait?”

“Ngingakuthokozela lokho ntokazi(I would like that)”, I turn and walk inside the house and he goes to the living room. I get to the kitchen and I make some juice and dish up for him since there are no biscuits I go and serve him and he thanks me.

“Bongani hasn’t told me about you yet”, he says.

“Oh we are not dating, I am here on Busisile’s account”, I mention.

“Oh, I see.”

“Let me leave you”, I say.

“Okay, thank you”

I walk away and go to the bedroom I used and I get shoes and wear them before I go out of the bedroom and I meet Bongani in the kitchen.

“Hi”, I say.

“Hi,how are you?”

“I am fine and yourself?”

“I am good”

“I cooked, should I dish up for you?”

“Yes please”, I nod my head and get a plate for him.

He is still in here in the kitchen.

“Your brother is waiting for you”

“I will go to him shortly”, he mentions and I just nod my head.

He goes and gets a glass of water and I give him his food and he thanks me before walking away.

I will say that man is mighty weird.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 25

MANDISA

The visit to the doctor was not that long, the doctor gave me some prescription to get some medication. The car was silent and not any one of us were talking. This is a first and usually when this happened it was from my side and he would be sweet talking me into forgiving him. eventually I would forgive him. I look at him and he is focused on the road. He drives to the drive thru for Nandos and he gets me my favourite meal and when he has paid and collected he gives the meal to me and I thank him.

He keeps his silence then and drives me back home. When we get home he parks the car just by the gate.

“I will see you on the next appointment, do call when you need anything”

“I need you”

“Mandisa”

“I love you Mabutho and that cant just change”

“I know”

Silence prevails between us.

“I have to go Mandisa”

“I will call you”, he just nods his head.

“Don’t call me if it is not something concerning the pregnancy”, he says.

“It will”, I am part of the pregnancy too.

He hops out of the car and he opens the door for me and I hop out. We say our last goodbyes and I leave him with a heavy heart. I then entered my home and I felt so below, how can he choose her over me? Us?

BUSISILE

I wanted to help Mabutho’s aunt in making supper but she told me that I should relax with her sister, her daughter lives at res so she is not here but she told me she will come here tomorrow so that she can see me and have someone her age she can go around Durban with. I have never been around much and the things I know are from Mabutho and no one else. I know I am not far with my pregnancy but it already feels like I am when I haven’t started much. We are watching some comedy show and MaThabethe is laughing more than I am, she is enjoying it so much. Her sister comes in the living room carrying her phone and she gives it to her.

“Its your ex”, she says that handing her phone to MaThabethe and she stops the laughing and takes it.

“Ndumezulu”, her tone indicates that she is annoyed but she stands up from the couch and walks away.

I am left here all alone and I don't know if I should change the channel or not but what will I watch if I do? The front door soon opens and Mabutho walks in. he looks drained but he smiles my way and I return the smile to him.

“How are you?”, he asks as he comes to sit next to me.

“I am good, your aunt is going to make me gain weight in no time”

“She overfeeds everyone”, he mentions and he pulls me closer to him.

“How was the appointment?”

“It was okay, Mandisa is still not into terms that we are separate”, he says looking at me.

“I... she has been with you for a long time and she is pregnant”, I say.

“I do understand what you mean but I don't want to be with her when I will not reprocate the energy she wants me to”

“Maybe as time goes things will get better, give her time to come to terms”

“I know that you are a very nice person but when it comes to Mandisa she can be mean and I want you to never let her walk over you okay?”

I nod my head.

“Promise me Mabusi”

“I promise”, he kisses my forehead.

“Musani ukujolela phambi kwabantu abadala(Don’t do your things in front of older people)”, I shift from Mabutho as his mother comes in and I look down.

“We are sorry ntombi yaMphembe”

She clicks her tongue.

“Your father doesn’t give up”, she says as she places her phone on the coffee table.

“I am disowned so I don’t have one”

“Don’t play like that”, she says.

I keep my silence.

They keep on speaking back and forth and I excuse myself to the kitchen.

IMINATHI

These men left after clearing the pot and I caught a glimpse of what they were talking about but I am not sure if it is true or not. I don't know what to say honestly about everything. I am leaving soon and I am quiet excited about that too.

I have cooked supper, I love cooking especially outside in the fire while my father used to tell us stories with uMakhulu when we were young with my cousins that I lived with. They were two boys and us two girls but my girl cousin died. She had a headache and she went to sleep and that was the end for her which left me with my two male cousins. They are married now, have wives and work back home and a family that is why I am my father's responsibility, they can't chip in much with regards to my life but I still love them.

I have made some steam bread and beef stew as well. I wish there were the beef bones here instead of the actual meat but I am okay with it regardless of it being unavailable. I am done with cooking and I just need to bath and then relax now. I quickly move from the kitchen and I go to the bathroom and I quickly take a bath and after I am done I get out and I go to the bedroom. I change and get dressed in some of this man's clothes that he has lent to me well they are mine now. I will wear them on my lazy days. I can't even look at myself through the mirror and the only mirror available is in his bedroom and

the microwave that serves to be a mirror to me. What kind of house lacks mirrors? What about the guests honestly.

I get to the kitchen and I go and drink some water, it is already dark outside and he has not come back home. Winter is approaching so maybe it is still early, I don't even have a phone to ask him if he is safe. I don't want his family blaming me if he is somewhere dying.

I see the headlights shining through the window and it seems like a car is coming in. I rinse my glass after I am done and I wait for him to walk inside and he does after some time closing the door behind him.

“Molo bhuti”

“Sawubona “, he says as he walks in the kitchen and goes to get his usual dose of one cold beer for the day before he eats and rests.

“How was your day?”, he asks. Nice of him to ask and he is trying to make conversation.

“It was okay, nothing much happened. I cooked”, he nods his head.

Silence prevails between us.

“Should I dish up for you?”, I ask.

“Please”, he says.

“Okay, you need to freshen up then you can come and eat”

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he looks at himself.

“Is there anything wrong with me?”

“Yes, you need to take off that tie and all of that and wear something relaxing and comfortable before you even down that beer”, I point at it.

“I will still eat, the food wont change”

“Please let’s not fight over that”, he sighs.

“Fine”, he places the beer on the counter and leaves.

I prepare the food for the both of us and he comes back already changed. I tell him the food is ready and he says he will eat at the living room. I bring the food for the both of us and I sit down and so does he, he opens some tv to super sports and now we are here watching soccer. I dislike it but tolerate it. I start eating and he is not even using his spoon when he is eating.

He finishes first and I offer to get him another plate and he accepts the offer. It reminds me of my father and how he loved having seconds of my mothers food. She was such a sweet soul, always kind and giving even the little we had she was willing to give it to someone who will need it as well. I miss her, I miss her

everyday and my father has reminded me how I am like my grandmother and her as well. Both of them will always been my angels. My grandmother was unlike her daughter, she stood up for nonsense and she had a very big voice too. I dished up for him in a new clean place and got him some water to wash his hands. I went to give it him and he washed his hands and thanked me. It is the least I could do for him keeping me here despite my newly found friend being gone but it is the smallest gesture I can say thank you with.

He is halfway through the meal when I come back and I sit next to him.

“Unesandla esihle(You can cook)”, he says.

“Thank you”, he nods his head and goes back to eating and I do the same.

.

A week later and a few days closer to when I am leaving this place and I should say that staying here has been somewhat different for me in a sense that this man has been either uncomfortable in my presence or this man has been quiet and it is his nature to be quiet but I had let him be like that and I didn't want to bombard him in that manner as well.

We are painting a room, he mentioned that some of his siblings who are studying around this area are coming in the next few

days and so he is preparing an outside building for the rest of them. I hope by the time they come I will be gone.

“Where should I be placing this?”, I ask pointing at the box full of tools.

“Let me get that”, he comes and picks it up and puts it somewhere else.

“So you don’t want me to help you?”, I ask.

Already its lunch time, he had lunch and since all morning he has been cooped up in this room.

“I am fine”, he says.

“Why do you have to do that?”, he frowns and watches me.

“Do what?”

“You are uptight as I have mentioned before”

“I am just like this”

“Okay”, I say and I go and get a brush and I help him. he stops.

“Iminathi, I don’t want you to do any labour”

“Why?”

“It’s a mans job and I am almost done too”, he says.

“Bonga, this is the new era”, I say.

“An era of what?”

“An era where men and women can do the same things”, he steps closer to me and I look up to him.

“Uyazizwa kodwa ntokazi?(are you hearing yourself?)”

“Yes”, I say.

He swallows

“Can... Can I kiss you?”, I swallow while looking at him.

The space between us is closed in no time and our lips are in sync. The spill of pain from the paint brushes onto our bodies brings us back to the reality at hand and we pull away.

“I am sorry”, I quickly say first.

I am embarrassed. I drop the paint brush and rush off, we kissed. Oh my god we just kissed! What has just happened?

I get inside the house and rush to the bathroom and I close the door behind him. A knock quickly surfaces from the door.

“Iminathi please come out so we can talk”

I keep my silence.

“Please, ngizozibamba mama ukuthi ngingakuthinti(I will help myself and not touch you)”, he begs.

“I am about to clean up”

“Just a few seconds”, he says.

I sigh and take in a few breathes before I open the door and he stares at me.

“I am sorry if I scared you”

“You..you didn’t”, he nods his head.

“I don’t know what more to say”

“You don’t have to say anything”, I quickly reply.

He just nods and presses his lips together.

Let me leave you to get cleaned.

I thank him before I close the door and lean against it.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 26

BUSISILE

It has been a bit of a rollercoaster but also it has been a time where life seemed to make some sort of sense to me as well, Mabutho having to start from scratch his whole life has not been a bed of roses for him, he used his savings to buy a farm and that meant that his car had to be included for him to do that and he got one just in Ashburton. His friend has been off help too more than his many siblings. So that was the first turn of events for him, secondly getting clients was a bit challenging too as much as he had good clients back when he was under his family but they are not used to the land he had so he has some building up to do but it seems like things are going to come together slowly but surely.

MaThabethe has been staying in Durban with her sister and so as us, moving wouldn't be a great idea considering the financial position this man has put himself in and the fact that he is expecting children as well has contributed some how but I am trying all I can to be as supportive to him as I could possibly be.

Mphembe has been begging MaThabethe into coming back but she is hearing non of it, she is actually coming out of her shell and I think the real MaThabethe is yet to be seen. Mandisa, I

have kept my distance around her and Mabutho has tried to get us civil but I know that she hates me and I do understand why she is like that. I do not blame her for such.

It has been just 4 months now into this pregnancy and I am starting to show now, my wardrobe has not changed much just that I cant wear some of the clothes that Mabutho bought for me when we were living in the farm but he did get me some new clothes though I thought it is unnecessary because I still have my old clothes and they have space for me but this man insisted on me getting some more comfortable clothes for myself.

I am also thinking I shouldn't go to a private doctor but go to the clinic for check ups so that he can save much money, Mandisa is ahead of me with her pregnancy, just two months if I am not mistaken before she gives birth and he needs to have something prepared for the baby that will come.

It is early in the morning and I just got out of bed and left him still asleep and I went to take a quick shower to wash off our odor from last night's sinful activities. I used to sneak in here or he would sneak into the room I used to sleep in, we used to sleep in separate rooms until he had a 'chat' with his mother who then allowed us to sleep together in one room. It helps because at times I do crave to be one with him and he doesn't mind feeding my craving and desire. I get out of the shower and

I quickly go and get dressed, I walk out of the room and make my way downstairs and it is quiet, no one is awake as yet. I get the pots and start with making some porridge with butternut today, I don't know if Mabutho would like it but I hope that he does, as I am almost done MaThabethe comes down into the kitchen.

"Hawu Busisile wavuka ekseni kangaka(Busisile why are you awake this early?)" , she asks.

"I was tired of resting"

"You should rest, you are pregnant after all" , she mentions and I just nod my head.

"Can I dish up for you?"

"You relax, I will dish up for everyone. Go and call Mabutho, ilanga lizongena enqeni manje(The sun is way up now)" , she says.

"Okay ma" , I move away from her leaving her with dishing up.

Her sister is sure awake, I think. She usually is not an early bird but she does come out eventually. I go into the room Mabutho and I use and I wake him up and he opens his eyes.

"Good morning, food is ready and your mother is looking for you" , I say.

"Good morning Sthandwa sami" , I blush shying away from him.

He sits up and rubs his eyes before he stretches.

“What time is it?”

“I think its 8 am” |

“You look fresh”

“Thank you”

“You woke up early again”, I look away from him and play with my fingers.

“Mabusi, please relax. Don’t worry yourself much.”

“I am just helping out Sothole”, a little smile creeps on his face before he gets out of the bed and comes to my side.

“Don’t try and soften me up”, he warns and I nod my head.

“Yes”

He kisses my forehead.

“Rest, I will make the bed”, I nod my head.

“Okay”, I turn around and leave him in the room.

I get down stairs and MaThabethe and her sister are there in the kitchen already, I greet and she responds.

“How is the little one treating you?”, she asks.

“Well so far”, I say and find myself rubbing my little bump.

“I cant wait for little feet to run around here”, she says in excitement.

“Let’s hope Mabutho allows you guys to stay for long even after things get better”, MaThabethe mentions.

“I hope so”, I say and then there is a ring on the intercom.

Mabutho’s aunt goes and answers it.

“Hello”

“Hello, MaThabethe”

“Yes, who is it? How may I help you?”

“It’s Ndumezulu”, the name comes up and MaThabethe’s mood changes immediately.

“Can you please let me in, I just want to talk to Bathabile”, he mentions.

“I will sort it out, don’t open the gate”, MaThabethe mentions to her sister.

“She will see you shortly”, I swallow as she smiles at me and MaThabethe walks out.

“Come and eat your food my child and don’t worry okay”

I join her in the eating while MaThebethe is still outside and Mabutho soon joins us.

“Your father is here”, his aunt says and he grabs a chair and I get him his food and he thanks me.

“Oh”, he says.

“Mabutho I know that you don’t want to be associated with him but please you guys need to mend things”

“Aunty the only thing I am willing to do is do a ceremony as an apology to that man and the ancestors to cleanse Mabusi and I for wronging him but as of that I am not taking it any further than that”, he says.

I sigh, we have tried. We have all tried to convince him otherwise but he is hot headed.

“I signed us up for a birthing class”, he mentions to me.

“For what?”, I ask softly.

“So we can be prepared for the baby”

“It is like exercises for you mostly”, his aunt mentions.

“I.. its okay, I think the reading of articles and attending the doctor is fine for now”

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I appreciate the thought but we also have to be mindful of the money he is spending.

“We will talk about this later”, he mentions and I nod my head.

“Okay”

We carry on eating.

NARRATED

Bathabile makes her way towards Ndumezulu who takes the time to admire the woman that the Gods have blessed him to be his wife, it has been hard without seeing this woman in their home yards of him having to hug the curves of the woman he loves dearly. It has been hard, very hard for him. he woke up early and embarked on a journey coming here on his own not forgetting to get something for his woman along the way, the flowers from Woolworths with their moist chocolate cake and some appetizer was enough to always woo this woman in. He is not much on the romantic side but this woman introduced that to him, he has been trying through all of his wives too.

She reaches him and doesn't open the gate. He is standing in front of it with flowers in his hand and the other treats on the passenger seat waiting for him to take them and give them to his woman. She folds her arms across her chest and she swallows.

“Stha...”

“What are you doing here Ndumezulu?”, she interrupts him and he swallows.

He is sweating, he knows that he should've taken a better approach with regards to Busisile and not have let his hands itch and his mind switch off to hurting her.

"Please lend me an ear, I am sorry for what I did"

"Why do you do it Ndumezulu?"

there it is, he cannot explain how his temper gets the better of him.

"It was not my intention"

"If I didn't leave would you be trying to reason with me and what you have done?", he looks down when she mentions that.

She gazes upon him for a moment as he is silent. She knows her answers already.

"Ayidle iyshiyele Mkami(I am sorry)", he says and attempts to look at her.

She sighs.

"I am not going to say anything further, you should leave", she says.

"I will apologize to MaSibisi", he says. He just wants to fix things with his wife.

“She wronged you Mphembe so I don’t want it to be like I am forcing you to do that to her. Just leave the child alone”, he says.

He smiles, the smile creeps up on his face unexpectedly as he hears her calling him by his clan name. there might be progress.

“What do you want me to do?”, he asks.

Frustrated at that.

She looks at him.

“I want you to go home to your other 5 wives and let me be, I am not coming back. I have made up my mind”, she says and turns leaving him standing there with the flowers he bought for her.

She didn’t even ask if they are for her as she usually does when he buys them once in a while.

Memories flood him, the memories that play like a movie to him when he was a young man in a relationship with this city girl that had him by his chin. When he was begging like this at her gate for the same reason he is here for today.

He sighs, giving up is not in him. He once won her back and he is determined to get his wife back.

IMINATHI

School, it has been going good and I have once made friends with the library. I know my way around it too and I have gotten the hang of studying once again, the exams are soon approaching. Just a week before we can start and I will be done just next week and I will go home quiet soon, even my bursary is paying out of which is very helpful.

It is a cold winter but I am craving for some wings from Kfc and so I asked my roommate if she would like to come with me but she declined the offer, mentioning her insufficient funds. I too have the, I only have R100 in my bank account and it has to pull me through for atleast a week and a few days and then I will be okay but I just want to make myself happy at the moment so I let her be. I put a jacket over me and grab my phone and card before I move out of the heading to the nearest mall here.

My phone, it's a very expensive one at that. Bongani got it for me 4 months ago before we departed our ways and a few things to help me settle. I am grateful for his kind gesture. We exchanged numbers and his reason for having my number it was to 'check up on me', he did check up on me that day if I had settled well and maybe a few days later and after that I have never heard from him again. I think he is keeping his distance and I have never really attempted calling him, what will I say? I am just scared to just check if he is fine just once

but I have told myself that I don't have a valid reason to call so I have never really called him.

I make my way to the mall and I get there and get to KFC and have my order taken then I wait for it. I keep on scrolling through social media just to keep myself busy.

I do not even have Busisile's number and I would like to check on her after the drama she has in her life. Her marriage might've ended that day too.

I find myself messaging this man asking for him to possibly get me Busisile's contacts just as I think of her.

The whatsapp message goes through, as much as he doesn't have any profile picture but it shows that he is online. I don't think he uses this app much as I have never seen him post even once. Well I am lying, last week he posted a picture of some Zulu king with a zulu related caption that had praises, I was bored of it so I skipped it and dry videos too that are supposed to be funny when they are not.

He is typing back, the message comes through.

'UMaSibisi akwudlali uwasaphi(MaSibisi doesn't have Whatsapp)", this man.

'I can call her'

‘Mina angifonelwa ngani?(Why don’t you call me?)’, I find myself speechless.

‘For what reason?’, I send the message.

Really for what reason.

‘Ukube nginokhokho bami manje bekuzoba njani?(If I was dead I wonder how things would be like?)’, he says.

‘You are alive’

‘Can I see you mama?’, flutters in my stomach.

‘Can I have the number please?’, I don’t think I would like to face him.

‘Please’, he sends.

‘Okay, only for an hour’, I find myself replying.

He sends the number, mxm bloody thing!

My order comes and I go and collect it.

.

I have called Busisile, we talked for a little while and to hear that she is doing okay gives me ease.

I like her and her character and if I didn’t meet her then I don’t know where I would be now. Here I am making my way to this man’s car in this winter darkness. I get to his car and get inside.

Being a gentlemen is frozen this winter I see. The car is warm and cozy too shutting out the harsh coldness.

“Hi”, I say.

“Hey, how are you?”, he asks.

“Ndisaphila wena?(I am still alive and you?)”

“Ngiyaphila nami(I am good)”, he says and I nod.

Silence prevails between the both of us.

“I bought some things for you”, he says drawing a plastic from the backseat. A Woolworths one and I peak inside, there is some cake. Hot chocolate sachets and some snacks too with Yogurts in bottles too. I look at him.

“Thank you”, I say.

“You like it?”, he asks and I nod my head.

“Yes”, he slightly smiles.

“I am happy to see you”, I shy away from him.

He is making me feel shy all of a sudden in this car.

CHAPTER 27

IMINATHI

He has sent a message, I do not know how to comprehend or should I say that I do not know how to respond to the message but he simply wished me a day ahead and also asked me if we can see each other during lunch hour. Meaning we should meet around 12:00-14:00 between that time, I am guessing because he didn't specify which time he would like for us to meet.

I wonder for what also. I am not feeling too good today and it is a lucky day for me because I have online classes so that means that I can stay inside. I get off the bed leaving my phone on the bed and I make my way to the kitchen and I open the fridge and my cake is gone, I feel my heart sinking in my stomach. I feel angry right now. I rush through the passages and I go to each room knocking on the door.

"You are going to break the door in the morning! We are sleeping", the first girl opens saying that.

"Who took my cake from the fridge? I didn't put it in there for you to eat it", I say.

"Haibo, we didn't do anything"

She closes the door on my face.

I feel like punching someone, these girls will know me. They have just dampened my mood. I get to my room and slip in my bed and I try to calm down before I start killing other people's children. I search for some bar fridges for sale online and on the student page that maybe someone is selling and oi find them but I don't have the money at the moment. I thought maybe I would find one for R900 but they range higher than that. My phone rings and it is one of my cousin brother's. I haven't spoken to him in a while and this is a bit of a surprise considering that they are well wrapped around their husband duties.

"Hello"

"Mimi ka tata wakhe"

"Molo bhuti, uphillile?(Are you well?)"

"Ndiphilile, wena uright? How are things there? Ndivile about you encountering problems"

"Yes, they are sorted now, I am good"

"Good then"

"How is your wife?"

"She is good, she is outside making porridge"

"Greet her for me"

“I will, I am happy to hear that you are okay, uyathandwa Mimi(You are loved mimi)”, that I know.

“Ndiyazi, ndiyabulela ngothando endil’ fumanayo kuni (I know, I am grateful for the love I receive from you guys)”

He chuckles.

“Look, I will call you later okay?”}

“Okay”

“Bye”, he hangs up after that.

For a moment I have even forgotten that I was a bit angry over the cake, I am not going to buy it at woolworths, I am not insane like that. I will just have to find the culprit and punish them so they can learn not to take people’s things. I get off the bed and I make it, let me bath and maybe I will feel better.

.

From studying and going through my lecture slides to me being tired for the day and I am now scrolling through illegal websites searching for an eye catching movie that I can download. My phone rings when I find one and put it under the download list and I take it. Its Bongani, I answer the phone and there is a bit of silence before he speaks.

“Sesixabene mama? Khona esikubangayo?(Are we fighting mama?)”, he asks.

“No, why would you think that?”, I ask.

“You didn’t talk to me since yesterday and just looked at the message I sent”, he says.

Oh I forgot about that message.

“What do you want us to meet for what reason?”, I ask.

“I...I... I would like for us to talk”, he says.

“Is there something wrong?”

“I think as adults its better if we talk face to face”, he says.]

“Uhm, I don’t know. I am not good company today”

“Why?”, this man.

“I am just having a bad day”

“I promise I will not make your day worse”

I keep my silence for a moment.

“Okay then, should I dress up?”

“No, just come as you are”

“Where are you?”

“I am at work but I will leave now, I will tell you when I am there”, he says.

“Okay”, we end the call after some time and I carry on where I left with my findings.

After about an hour I receive a call from him telling me that he is outside. I wear my shoes and then take at least my card in case and make my way out, I see my roommate and I brief her about the cake situation and she tells me she will be on the look out for me and sympathizes with me. Why didn't they just ask for a slice? They just took the whole thing, I went outside and this man is standing outside his car waiting for me. I see a little smile forming on his face as he watches me make my way towards him making me feel nervous, why is he smiling? Is there something amusing on my face? I find myself rubbing my face to make sure that things are okay and I reach him.

“Sawubona”

“Molo”

“How are you?”

“I am okay, I guess”. He frowns and steps closer to me and he removes a loose lash from my face.

“Why? What happened?”

“You know res, they stole my cake but I will find that person and they will know me”

“Don't worry about it, we can get another one”

I look at him.

“It’s not about that only, they will carry on stealing my things. “, I feel so short as I am breaking my neck to look at him, okay I am exaggerating but you know what I mean.

“Why would they steal your things?”, he asks.

“We all share a kitchen so everyone’s meat is in the fridge.”, I say.

“Mmmh okay, come”, he says and we go to his car.

We get inside and he drives off from my res and the car is cozy.

“So, what did you want us to talk about?”, I ask.

“A lot of things”, he says.

“What things?”, he steals a glance from me.

“I can’t talk to you without looking at you”, he says.

“Ohw”

“We will talk”, I just nod my head.

He asks what I would like to have and I just ask for some Nandos, I am craving it and it is getting a bit pricey these days too. He gets it for us through the drive thru and I thank him, he goes and parks the car and he lets me eat

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he is his silent self, I think this man is overshadowed in his family and him being the middle child too I would assume contributes. I get done and look at him.

“What do you want us to talk about?”

“Bengisacela sishade , sithandane(Can we get married and fall in love)”, he says.

What?

“Excuse you, uyaziva uba uthini?(Are you hearing yourself?)”

“Yes”

“Bongani asithandani noku thandana ngoku uthetha ngomtshado nomathandana ndi...(Bongani we are not even in a relationship and now you are talking about marriage and relationships)”

“I know”

“It seems like you are taking a huge step, you know that relationships are hard,I wont start with marriage it doesn't even work for old people anymore”

“I know that Nathi, I know all of that and I wouldn't be saying this engathi angiphilile, I know what I want”

“I don't think I know you that well”, I say.

“I have 29 siblings, the rest I think you know. I will not learn about you in one day and the same for you”

“Ndicela amanzi”

He gives me his water and I drink it, suddenly I feel hot.

“I love you”, I turn to look at him and my hands are shaking.

“Please take me back”

“Nath...”

“Bongani uyandicapukisa, andifuni ukuva kwanto (You are irritating me, I don’t want to hear anything right now)”, he just presses his lips and he nods.

He starts the car and he takes me back to res. When he gets there he parks the car and I get out running while rushing to go inside. My heart is beating very fast at the moment.

BUSISILE

I am getting used to sitting at times and just not doing anything, Mabutho went to his doctor’s appointment with Mandisa. He took his mother’s car and he uses it so much. MaThabethe is in her room and yesterday she came back from seeing Mphembe in a sour mood. I am watching some tv and whatever I am watching is entertaining me too. My phone rings and I take it and its Bhuti Bongani. He told me yesterday that iminathi was

asking for my number and he gave it to her and I really was happy to hear from her. I answer the phone.

“Hello bhuti”

I hear him heave a sigh.

“Sorry to bother you Busisile”

“It is okay, I am not doing anything”

“Can I talk to you?”, he asks.

“Sure, is there something wrong?”

He heaves a sigh once again.

“Yes, I...I like your friend very much”, he says.

“Friend?”

“Iminathi”, he mentions and I almost gasp. I didn’t think of that.

“Oh, that’s nice”

“We are not together just like you and Mabutho”

“Ohw”

“I want to do right by her”

“Meaning?”

“I asked her if I can send my uncles to her home”

“But bhuti this is modern times and she comes from a different place unlike us, in our culture it might be easy to propose marriage and accept it and you know your partner along the way but for her it might be something new and different”

“She is angry with me”, he sighs.

“Why do you want to marry her first what if you have dislikes along the way?”

“I am certain about her Sisi”, he says.

“I am new in this dating thing. I have only been married once and I don’t have great advice for that but try talking to her again and hear from her.”

“Okay, I will do that. Thank you”

“You should talk to your mother or maybe your brother’s too or your father about this”

“No, my father is too old school. He will not understand I love someone from another tribe”

“I am sure he will understand”

“He disowned his own child, I think I am fine for now”, he mentions.

“Okay”

“I will visit soon”

“Okay”, we end the call and MaThabethe walks in.

“Is that Mabutho?”

“Bhuti Bongani”

“Oh, what did that one want?”

“He wants to get married”, she pops her eyes.

“You mean my Bongani?”

“Yes”

“Haibo with who?”, she sits next to me.

“Don’t tell him or anyone that I told you but its with Iminathi”

“That friend of yours we once met?”, I nod my head.

“She is young, why are they rushing?”

“I don’t know, they are not together like Mabutho and I but he told her that he wants to marry her”

“Like father ,like son. You know when I met Mphembe he did the same to me and I thought, this rural boy thinks I am one of those farm girls who will fall on their knees to that. I liked my freedom but 5 months down the line I married him even more to spite MaKhumalo”, she says.

“I don’t think Iminathi would survive the kids and the wives if so”

“I trust that girl she would be fine. Mabutho has to speed up his things and marry you”, I shy away.

“I am still married to Mphembe ma”

“Haibo that goat thing? It means nothing, under Home affairs you are single sisi”, she stands up .

“Would you like some juice?”

“No thank you”, I say and she nods and walks away.

.

It has been just a few days now since the call from Bhuti Bongani and also Iminathi, she told me what Bongani told me but I heard her side and she said she is scared because she doesn't want to marry a monster in disguise but MaThabethe's kids in my opinion are sweet hearts just like their mother.

Today Mabutho and I are going to be talking about the apology we will send to Mphembe and also cleanse our names and his and for everything that we have done in the Ntuli yard and name as well. I am well nervous too, as much we haven't done much yet but just having to go and look at Mphembe scares me. I am scared of him, I will not lie.

I am in the kitchen, today I have decided that I will cook for everyone. Mabutho walks in the kitchen and he comes my way and kisses my cheek.

“Sthandwa sami”

“Sothole”

“What are you doing?”

“I am cooking,I don’t want to be lazy”

“You are not being lazy. I wish I could give you a lot more during this pregnancy”, he says and I turn around from the pots and look at him.

“Do not worry about it, I am happy and content and I am enjoying everything”, I say.

He smiles and perks my lips.

“I love you so much Mabusi”

“I love you more”, he kisses me and I respond then we break the kiss.

“I.. I was thinking”, I say.

“mmmh”

“That I use the doctors from the clinic, that way you can prepare well for the baby. Mandisa is about to give birth and...”

“No Busisile, I have this under control. You will go to doctors and I will pay for them, you will give birth in comfort too just like Mandisa will too”

“I was just...”

“Don’t”, I nod my head.

“I am sorry”

“It is fine”, I nod my head.

I had hoped that maybe he hears me further and hears me out.

CHAPTER 28

BUSISLE

Today I have a doctor's appointment with the doctor and I am going with Mabutho, he has never missed accompanying me to the doctor and I enjoy going with him. We use his mother's car when travelling and he uses it so much since he sold his car just so that he can restart his life. I wish that I could help him more than anything but I know that in this day you need to be more educated to get a great job and getting that education is money on its own.

I go outside the house to wait for him by the car as he is still inside. My stomach is growing daily and I think I am gaining weight too, it's the sitting around that is making me be like that and as much as I know everyone wants me to relax but I do miss doing something everyday and every morning.

He comes out of the house and he opens the car and comes towards me and opens the door for me, he helps me inside and I thank him as he closes the door and then he goes around and gets inside the car and then he drives off.

"I am hoping that today we get to know the gender of the baby", he mentions.

We already know that his first born is going to be a boy. He told me months ago when he found out with Mandisa. Well I am

just hope that we have a healthy baby irregardless of its gender.

“What are you hoping for?”

“Anything”, he mentions.

“You know, I know that you are in a really tight spot in terms of finances but you have to do rifght by your child one day Mabutho”, I say and he sighs.

“I know baby, I know. I do want to”

“You will”

“It will happen after Mandisa has given birth. “, he says and I nod my head.

“You know why I love you?”

“No why?”, I look at him and he smiles.

“I love you because of the way you are and your heart. That is why I am scared that one day Mandisa will chew you up and I don’t want that for you”

“Don’t worry about me, I will be able to handle her”

“I hope so , I can fight for you but sometimes you have to stand up on your own”

“Okay”, I nod my head that moment.

“Have you spoken to your siblings?”, I ask.

“A few, yes”, I nod my head.

“Okay”

The drive commences and then we get to the doctor and make our way inside.

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I don't know how long I can wait to hold this precious thing that is in my stomach, I was once just afraid of being pregnant especially with Mabutho's child but now I am just loving everything that goes about that. We are now on our way to get something to eat, he said we just need some time to be alone away from the main house and everyone too, just the both of us. I agreed to that and now we are on our way to where he is taking me, I am looking outside the car and as the car drives I am falling in love with the city more and more. I have never really been to this part of town before so it is all new to me and it is quiet fascinating, I don't have friends here who will take me around to see everything and the only people who I go around with are MaThabethe , her sister and Mabutho too. That is all.

“Would you like to try something new?”, Mabutho asks.

“Yes”, I turned around to face him.

“Okay, we will try something”, he smiles.

“I cannot wait, I am excited”, I say clapping my hands and he chuckles.

We get to wherever we are going and he unbuckles my seat belt.

“I promise that I will give you everything you desire”

“I am content already”, I say to him and he smiles.

He gets out of the car and he comes and helps me out and closes the door behind me before he whisks us away from the parking lot going into the restaurant. It looks fancy and I love the lights too, we get to sit at the table and got to get a menu and we go through it. Some things I am not familiar with until Mabutho explains what they are and some I get what they are based on the ingredients that are there. He helps me order something I think I might like and then the person who has been helping us takes our orders and he leaves. We conversate together and then our drinks come and I have a sip off my drink as I am thirsty too. He calls the person who was helping us and he tells him to bring another drink that is just like mine before he walks away.

“You don’t like your drink?”

“No, its for you”

“I am fine with this one”

“You can finish that one if you want to”

“Thank you”, he smiles.

Our food soon arrives and we are just conversating well, I am doing most of the talking to be exact and he is listening while we are eating. As we are still enjoying our lunch, his phone rings and he takes it out and looks at me.

“It’s Mandisa”, he mentions.

“Oh”

He answers it.

“Mandisa”, he speaks. I carry on eating my food.

“What? Are you not due sometime next month and not now?”, he flinches after that.

“Okay, I am on my way”, he says.

He hangs up after.

“Mandisa is at the hospital, she is about to give birth”, he mentions.

“You should go”

“I am sorry

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Sthandwa sami”

“I understand”, I really do, you cant confirm when a child wants to come.

The person who was helping us comes back and he takes the food away to pack it away for us. Mabutho pays and we are now leaving. He is going to drop me home before he goes to be with Mandisa.

He drives us home and when we get home, I get inside and he tells me he will be back in a few. I get inside with the food and MaThabethe is seated with a young lady that I do not know.

“Hawu wabuya ngokusheha bengithi nishawa umoya nesoka lakho(You came back early, I thought you were going somewhere with your man)”, she says.

I greet the lady and she greets back.

“Mandisa is at the hospital giving birth”

“Haibo uMabutho akasangeni ezosho nje(Mabutho doesn't even come inside and report that)”, she says.

“He will be back”

“This is my niece she has one week off from her varsity life. She is Monde”

“I am Busisile”

“Umama has told me about you”, she smiles.

“Yah you are age mates, you should go and play together”,
MaThabethe says.

The lady laughs.

“Aunty we are old”

“Not that old Monde”, I ask if they would like what I have and
they decline and tell me that I can eat it alone.

I excuse myself to the kitchen to dish up for myself.

MANDISA

I feel so alone at the moment, I am just in excruciating pain
and I cannot seem to bare it. I want this over and done with
and my doctor hasn't attended me as yet. He is on his way.

“It could be the baby turning”, my mother tries to say.

“It is a bit painful”

“Don't worry”, I am worried, I now have to change the baby
shower invites to a sip and see.

“I now have to call the planner to change everything”, I say.

“Don't worry about that for now just focus on yourself.”

“I have called Mabutho”

She nods her head. My dad is out of the province but I am sure my mom had to let him know what is going on, finally my doctor comes and he sees me sweating my butt off.

“Good day”

“Doctor please...”

“Has another doctor done a scan on you?”

“Yes”, my mother mentions.

“Okay, please give me a few minutes then we will take it from there.”. my mother nods as he leaves the room.

IMINATHI

My little feet drag themselves going towards him, my heart is beating fast and the last time we talked was the time he said what he said to me. I am still in a state of shock but mostly I was just confused as to how he just came to that conclusion. What did I expect from a Zulu man honestly whom has a father who is a polygamous man. He has been trying to get to me but I have been silent, asking if we could talk but I do not know what I will say to him. I have nothing to actually say to him at all so I just don't know.

But today I have decided after this time that I faced him and close off any loose ends. He is standing by his car and he is

watching as I make my way to him. I finally reach him and there is some silence between the both of us.

“Sawubona”, he mentions”

“Molo”

“How are you?”

“I am good, how are you?”

“Ngiyancenga(I am okay)”, he says and then sighs there after.

“I am happy you are here”, he says.

I couldn't help myself but look at him.

“Ohw”

“I am sorry”, he says.

“About?”

“Scaring you but I was being honest”

“You don't even know if I like you like that”

“Isn't it my duty to love, provide and make you happy?”

“Yes as a man but I mean you cant just marry someone you don't like”

“Do you?”, I keep my silence.

“Nathi”, he says and I take in a deep sigh.

“I have never done this before Bongani”, I say.

“Dating?”

“No, this. The marriage talk and everything, why can't we date for a while and see where it goes?”

“If it makes you happy it's okay, but to me I don't see the point because I am sure what I want from you and us”

“That is?”

“That I take you as my wife”

“I am not ready to pop babies”

He laughs, the first time I see him laughing this much.

“Babies?”

“Yes, isn't that what your father's wives do?”

“Yes but you will not be his wife, you will study like you want to and we will not have kids now.”, he says.

“I am not a virgin too if that is what you are looking for”

“Ungakhathazeki ngalokho (Do not worry about that)”, he says.

I look at him and just nod my head.

“Can I hold you?”, he asks as he holds my hand and pulls me closer to him.

He holds my waist and he kisses my cheek and then whispers into my ear.

“I cant help myself, ngiyakuthanda futhi ngifuna ukwenza into eqotho nobulungiswa kuwe(I love you and I want to do the most honest and rightful thing to you)”, he says.

“Oh”

He looks at me and he leans in to kiss me and I let him be, I want to kiss him too. Our lips touch and soon I am holding onto him as he kisses me. After the kiss we break it up and he perks my lips.

CHAPTER 29

BUSISILE

I am starting to fall asleep as we are watching a movie in Monde's room and she just seems fond of me when we have just recently met. The rubbing motion on my stomach is not really helping because it is also contributing to me starting to feel like I am dozing off.

"What gender is the baby?", she wakes me up and she has stopped touching my belly.

"I am not yet sure", I say.

"What is the other lady having?"

"Mandisa?"

"Yes her"

"A baby boy", I say.

"I like you", I give her a smile.

"You are beautiful"

"I have some money, why don't we order some snacks"

"I eat too much lately"

"Don't worry about that", she sits up and gets her phone.

“I need the bathroom, I want to pee”, it is getting late as well and I am just waiting for Mabutho to inform me of any progress with Mandisa.

I go to the bathroom and I do what I need to do, after I am done I get out and I go and wash my hands before leaving. I go to the room Mabutho and I are using and I get a fleece before I go back to Monde’s room. She already is on her phone pressing away for whatever that she is looking for. I get in bed next to her and she then places her phone aside. My phone rings that moment and I quickly take it before I answer.

“Hello”

“Mabusi”

“Hey, how is everything?”

“She gave birth”, he says.

“That’s good, I am so happy for you. How is the baby?”

“They took her away”, he says.

“It’s a girl?”

“Yes it is, she looks just like Phumlani”, I giggle.

“I mean she does look like you too if that is the case”

“Or mah”, I giggle.

“What are you doing?”

“I am watching a movie with your cousin”

“Which one?”

“Monde”

“Oh, okay then. I hope she is not bombarding you with anything”

“Not at all, I like her”, Nomonde looks at me.

“Okay, let me go. I will be back soon. I love you”

“I love you more”, I say before I hang up.

“Senihleba ngami emjolweni wenu(You are gossiping about me in your relationship)”, this is something MaThabethe would say.

“We are not”

“I heard my name loud and clear”

I laugh.

“You are just like your aunt”, she smiles.

“Come let me massage your feet”

“I am fine”

“It is fun Busi”, she says and she takes my feet and place them on her lap and gives me a massage.

This family and pampering me, they will make me even more lazy right now.

IMINATHI

I found myself in this man's house, cooking for him. I have never vowed that I would not cook for a man but it is something that my brothers have instilled in me not to do like the girls in res for their res boyfriends so technically I am not doing it because I am cooking in this man's house.

I left with him, I don't know how I got here but I did. I am lying, he asked for us to go and eat somewhere and this little girl went and packed an overnight bag incase and that incase just ended here.

I am hungry, the meal we had just evaporated in my stomach so I thought I should cook if he is hungry as well. I think the meal I had didn't fill me up. I just had something small, I thought it would fill me up but it did not.

I turn around from the sink and I look at this man staring at me.

"Hey", I say and he smiles.

"Hey, this kitchen suites you", he mentions before he comes closer to me.

"I love cooking", I mention.

Yes and I do not mind it at any time.

“And you are a very great cook sthandwa sami”

He holds me and I look at him.

“Really?”, he nods and kisses my cheek.

“I am so happy that you are here with me”, he mentions and I melt in his arms.

My first Zulu boyfriend. I have heard stories about these creatures, stubborn and they cannot be told anything. Social media voting the men as the scariest heart breakers but so far this man is the sweetest.

I think if all goes well I will be doing a hash tag on Twitter stating that it is the hill I will struggle on.

“Let me turn off the stove and then I will dish up”

“I am not hungry”, he mentions. Yes he cant be hungry because he had a lot of steak while I stuck to pasta and a salad.

I was trying to be fancy and that fancy didn’t work out for me.

“Okay”, he lets me go and I go and turn off the stove. I dish up for myself and I go and change into more comfortable clothes.

I get in his bedroom and I go and scout in his closet. Adidas shorts with this Nike vest. I drag his shoes. I did mention that I love this man’s clothes.

I walk out of the room and he spots me before he chuckles.

“You are going to take my whole wardrobe at this rate”

“You should get two of everything now”

“Hayi mama, I cant have my beautiful woman looking like a man”, I smile.

“Ndimhle?”

“Kakhulu sthandwa sami”, he comes and gives me a kiss on the lips.

“I cannot wait for the day you let me take you and make you a Ntuli”, Oh this one.

BUSISILE

He walks in the room just as I have come in from the bathroom and now I am trying to moisturize my body and get into my pyjamas. He came in some time ago, yes I heard the car come in the gate. I think he was still informing his mother how things went at the hospital with Mandisa and her giving birth. I get dressed and he watches me before I get on the bed and he kicks off his shoes and joins me in while holding me.

“You are back”

“Yes, I missed you”, he says and kisses my neck.

“How is she?”, I ask.

“They are okay, I left them while they were sleeping”

“I thought you are having a boy”

“Me too

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but it turns out to be my little girl”, I smile.

You could see how happy he is in his eyes. He is a father after all now.

“Tell me everything, did you take pictures of her? What is her name?”, I say and Mabutho chuckles.

“Slow down sthandwa sami, one question at a time”

“I just feel excited, its like I am the one who just gave birth”

“You will soon and we will have our baby with us, by then things will be in order”, I nodded my head.

“Her name is Zamamphemba Honour Ntuli. Her mother gave her the English name”, he doesn’t sound happy about that.

“You wanted her to have what name?”

“Just one Zulu name”

“Its okay, atleast she has one”

He laid on his back and I laid on his chest before he placed his arm around me.

“She will use it often”, I nodded my head.

“I have to go back home and sort things with my father”

“You want to talk to him?”

“I just want to do right for my children and you”, he pulls me to him closer.

“So that I can marry you one day”, I smile.

“I love you”, I say.

“You are the best thing that has ever happened to me”

“Really?”

“Yes”, he mentions.

I love Mabutho so much, I regret making Mphembe angry but I don't regret falling in love with his son.

“I will ask Mandisa after some time if you can come and see the baby”, he mentions.

“I do not think she will be comfortable as yet and lets give her some time to adjust and respect her”

“Okay then, but I think with time you guys will have to be in each other's presence because of the baby”

“Yes I know that”

.

The next day came and MaThabethe and her sister with Mabutho left for the hospital. I know that Mabutho has not informed his father that he is now a father but he did inform his brothers about that and I heard they will come and see him later on. I am stuck with Monde but I really enjoy her company, she is just like her mother and aunt, always around and saying whatever that comes in her mind. She was baking something for us to eat while we are watching some tv and I guess she loves tv very much at the moment.

“What do you want to have while we wait?”, she asks.

“Nothing, I am fine Monde”

“Mah will kill me if I don’t take care of you”

“I wish my friend lived near by, she is really amazing”, I say.

Yes I miss Dudu, a lot and I wish at times that I could just be in her space. Yes Iminathi is my friend but I feel like I have just left and forgotten about Dudu. All the things that have been happening and she doesn’t even know what is going on in my life right now. If I get back where I used to live, I will go and see her and tell her that I am going to be a mother now.

“There is someone outside”, Monde says and goes to answer the intercome before she comes back.

“Is it someone you know?”, I ask.

“Yes, grab some juice”, she says and I go to the fridge and grab some juice.

I pour some for the both of us and after some time Bongani enters the kitchen followed by Iminathi who rushes to me.

“Oh my god you are pregnant!”, she inspects me.

“Khangе undixele ngalonto, uxolo sisi unjani?(You didn’t tell me about that, sorry sisi how are you?)”

“I think I did”, I say not remembering.

“I don’t remember”, she says.

“Hello Monde and Busisile”, Bongani greet.

“Hello Bhuti and Sisi”

“This is Iminathi, umkami. Themba lami, this is my cousin Nomonde”, he mentions and Iminathi blushes.

“You guys are married?”, I ask with a frown, confused. How quick.

“No, we are not. Come I want to feel your baby kick”

“I am going to the hospital, I will see you later”, he mentions before he leaves.

“You and Bongani”, I say to iminathi and she laughs.

“Khangе ndiyicinge nami but I mean we live once”, she says.

“I think I will like you”, Monde mentions.

“We are baking”, I say.

“I can help”, Iminathi says and they do the work and they don't let me be. They speak about university things as I watch them.

I also wish I was in university.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 30

MANDISA

The excruciating pain from my abdomen was felt, I couldn't give natural birth so I just opted for a C-section. I didn't want to go through all the trouble of giving birth naturally. I expected to have a baby boy but to my surprise it is a girl and I am happy, girls are mostly adored by their fathers, I have seen that with mine. I am just glad that I didn't get time as yet to shop for the baby, I was going to go next week and buying clothes that didn't fit a girl would be something else.

I have rested, I feel much better from yesterday. My father and mother bought things for us and so as Mabutho before he left. I wish he didn't have to leave but stayed longer for us but I guess he is running to his little.... Let me calm down before I get to explode.

I am bathed and in bed, my daughter should arrive here any minute with the nurse. I am staring at the tv screen when my parents walk in and I smile, my mother has a baby bag with her.

"Hello mommy", she is excited.

"Hello"

"We brought more clothes for Zama", I sigh.

Mabutho gave him that name and my mother loves it.

“Thank you”

“Is this boy coming?”, my father asks.

“Yes daddy, he is coming with his family. Please be nice”, he nodded his head.

The nurse walks in pushing my baby inside and I smile, I cannot believe I endured pain for something so beautiful, a part of me and Mabutho.

“Good morning”, the nurse greets and we greet back, she takes the baby and gives it to me and I hold her tiny body in my arms.

“She is all fed and changed, I will fetch her later”, the nurse mentions.

“Thank you”, my mother says and she walks out.

“Look how beautiful she is”, I am jealous because she looks nothing like me but more of Mabutho’s family.

“She doesn’t even look like me”

“She looks like her father”, my mother says.

I smile. She is beautiful though. I am grateful for her.

“Sanibonani”, we look towards the door and we see Mabutho with his mother.

Yes I know her because I have seen her pictures a couple of times.

“Hello”, my mother greets.

They walk inside, with a woman whom I presume is a family member too.

“We are from the Ntuli family, I am Mabutho’s mother”, his mother introduces herself to my family.

“I am Mandisa’s mother”, Mabutho is by side in no time and he is staring at the baby.

“It is nice to meet you, I hope we are not intruding anything”, his mother mentions.

“Not at all, this is our grandchild”, I look at Mabutho and he does the same before he greets and I reply.

“Do you want to hold her?”, I ask.

“She is small”, he says.

I know he is scared to do so, he was too yesterday.

“She is”, he stretched out his hands and I helped him hold her properly and he does it.

His mother is next to him in no time making baby sounds next to the baby and she has the widest smile, maybe she might

have some influence in us being a family and grooming our child together, after all she married a rural man.

“She looks like me when I was young”, she mentions and there is laughter in the room.

Soon his brother’s arrive baring gifts so as some of his sister’s too. The room gets full and my family excuses themselves saying they will see us later. I stayed with this family, I felt the warmth from them and as much as some didn’t really talk much but the girls did talk.

“You should have another child after this one so that the kids are not too much apart in age”, one of his sister’s mentions and the brothers clear their throats.

“Mandisa and I are not together anymore”, Mabutho says and it shatters me.

I just swallowed and kept quite.

“I have to get somewhere, I will see you guys later”, Mabutho says before he leaves the room.

The baby is in someone else’s arms asleep.

Leaving silence in the room and with his family in an awkward position.

“Our family will be in contact with your family about the damages sisi”, the older brother mentions.

Yes he was introduced as that.

“Damages of?”, I don’t understand.

“We will send a letter to you father”, he mentions before leaving and soon slowly everyone leaves.

A letter? Doesn’t a letter come when Lobola negotiations are done? I don’t know.

BUSISILE

I fell asleep on the couch with these two watching something and chatting, those muffins had an effect too. Yes when I am done eating and full, I just feel hot and stuffed and feel like sleeping of which I do now. Someone shakes me off my sleep and I open my eyes expecting it to be someone else but it is Iminathi.

“You have been sleeping for some time, I thought it was a nap. I don’t think its healthy to sleep on the couch”, I sat up and stretched myself.

“Monde and I made some food, are you hungry?”, I rub my stomach.

“No, I am fine”

“I cannot believe you are pregnant,so what now?”, she asks.

I am still trying to defrost from my sleep.

“I am just waiting to give birth”

“What happened?”, she asks and sits next to me and I rub my eyes.

“His father disowned us, meaning he lost everything he worked for but he is starting over”, I say and she gasps.

“Hayini, lotatomkhulu “

“Mmmh”

“I know you guys did him wrong but he can be angry and maybe get you guys to apologise some way”

“Mabutho and I will do that and apologise to the ancestors so everything goes okay in our lives”

“Uxolo vha? I know its not easy for you. you are young, my age and you are already going through a lot”

“Yes”

“I don’t wish to meet the others then”

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I look at her.

“You guys are serious with Bongani?”

“He is, I am scared though Busi, I don’t know what to expect”

“Bongani is a great man, MaThabethe’s kids are.

“Utsho ngoba ujola nonyana wakhe (You are saying that because you are dating her son)”, she laughs and I blush.

“He just had a baby”

“Hayini Busi!”, she gasps.

“They were together before us”

“Are they still together?”

“No”

“You are strong shame”

Monde came to us.

“Come lets eat, hey you are awake”, she says and I get off the couch.

“I am, I am tired too”

“Your man is on his way, both of you”, I am glad, I have missed Mabutho.

I went to use the bathroom and then I came back and then we went to eat together, these people really want me to get fat with time and I don't like that, I will be rolling. Yes I love the fact that I have gone from the small skinny frame and have gained some weight but soon I will pop, that I know.

After eating we went to wash the dishes and then we went back to our seating. As we are watching some tv we hear the

door opening and Omah with Mabutho walk inside the house and MaThabethe comes to us.

“Hello girls, hello Iminathi. I have not seen you in a long time my child, how are you?”, she asks squeezing her in a hug.

“Ndiphilile mama wena unjani?(I am well mama, how are you?)”, she says.

“I am well, all my girls are here”

“Mah what are you implying”, Mabutho asks.

“I have had enough of you boys, let these girls shine”, she says and I giggle.

He doesn't look happy about that.

“How was the hospital visit?”, I ask.

“I have very forward sisters from that man's forward wives”, Mabutho says.

“Haibo Mabutho, you don't say that. It is mean”, his aunt says.

“Haibo vele bayaphapha”, MaThabethe mentions.

Mabutho whisks me away from everyone else and we go to the backyard.

“How are you?”, he asks.

“I am okay, I just ate. I took a nap too”

He rubs my stomach.

“The baby is growing everyday”

“Yes”

“I think I have to speed up my apology process”, he sighs after saying that.

“That’s great. I hope your father reasons”

“I don’t think he will”, he says.

“We might be surprised”

“Mmmh, I want us to spend the afternoon together before I go and speak with some potential clients”, he says.

“Okay, I am fine with that”, he kisses my lips.

“I love you Mabusi and I will keep my promise”, he mentions.

I believe him, I know he would.

NARRATED

The Ntuli house hold has been filled with whispers and gossips around to fill all the questions that are arising. The wives haven’t had the courage to even ask their husband on what is happening, he has been occupied by his fallen relationship with Bathabile that he has even forgotten for a second about his anger towards Mabutho and his young wife Busisile.

He is in what used to be her room, yes he has other wives but he is longing for this one. He learnt love through Bathabile and all he has ever know was to grow the family name that is why he has so many wives.

He is the only child, the last person who carried the Ntuli name and he vowed to make sure that it multiples through him and he did that but it became an obsession that he couldn't stop, he wanted more.

He is laid on the bed with the soft sheets touching his skin, her scent has faded and it has brought much sadness to him that he had bought the exact fragrance that Mathabthe uses on herself to smel divine. He takes his phone and he makes a call and it rings a few times.

It gives him some hope that she will answer, he has been trying everyday to get hold of her and beg her but it hasn't been easy to even reach her. His Durban attempt failed the last time.

"Hello", her voice comes through making him nervous and happy at the same time.

The woman he loves has answered.

"Sthandwa sami"

"Ngikusize ngani?(what can I help you with?)", she says.

It sounds a bit harsh than the fact that his son and young wife deceived him.

“Please can we fix things”

“I am not going to be with an abuser Ndumezulu and you know that”, she mentions.

“I know, I promise sthandwa sami”

“Do you know you are a grandfather now”, she says.

“Oh”

“Oh?”

“Who is the parent?”

“It’s Mabutho’s he got his ex girlfriend pregnant”, he doesn’t know what to do.

“Is it a boy?”, he asks.

“It’s a girl”, he is more disappointed.

Makhumalo showed him the world when he had his first son. He was more happy when his love bore him boy children alone.

“Don’t do that, it is still your grand child, she is innocent”, he loves the way she has become soft and less aggressive”

“He needs to do right”

“He will”

“I love you”, he is moving away from the topic of his son. He is not the reason why he called, he wants to speak to her.

“I love you too, but I still am angry at you”, she says and hangs up leaving him before he could even respond.

His heart is happy, she still loves him and that has made his day so far since she left this house. He feels alive.

He looks at the phone and smiles before he tucks it away.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 31

BUSISILE

The house is a bit of a buzz at the moment, MaThabethe really is in her grandmother mode as it is, they are preparing something that they have bought for Mandisa and the baby. She is getting released today from the hospital and by this weekend we should be well on our way to the Ntuli household. MaThabethe called her husband and they spoke. He was pleased with just hearing from her I guess because we are allowed to come but we are going there with Mandisa and the baby after Mabutho's brothers are done with paying the damages. Yes he didn't want his father to be involved in that and his brothers have been really supportive in that.

This was one of the days where everyone was just in a jolly good mood as they wake up.

"Busi, you are not supposed to be on that chair", I was wiping the cupboards while standing on the chair.

I wanted to be active, something that will keep me distracted.

"Bhuti!", Monde shouts for Mabutho.

"I will not fall, do not worry"

"You are very stubborn at times"

“I am just cleaning Monde”

“What is wrong?”, Mabutho appears and he frowns upon seeing me.

“You see?”, Monde points at me.

He comes and gets me down. Monde takes the cloth away from me and Mabutho holds me close to him as she walks away.

“You always want to put yourself at risk”

“I was careful”

“It doesn’t ease me Mabusi”, he mentions.

“I am sorry then”, he kisses my forehead.

“Have I been neglecting you or do you feel neglected?”

“No, I understand that you want to prepare everything for the baby”

“But that doesn’t mean that I shouldn’t spend time with you”

“What do you want us to do?”, I ask.

“Maybe we can watch something and eat and sleep and kiss”, he kisses my lips and I giggle.

“There are elders in the house”

“And maybe I can be buried inside of you”, shivers go through me.

“That is something we should do in private”, he kissed my neck.

“So you want us to do it?”

I was feeling weak already.

“Mabutho”

“Yes”

“Let’s not be mischievous”, he chuckled.

“Okay, I will get some things for us to eat”, he mentions. \

“Okay, let me finish up here”, I say. He doesn’t let me go.

“Busisile, I do not want us fighting”, he says.

“Okay, I will stop”

“Please, I don’t want to be stressing over you a lot”, he mentions and I nod my head.

“I am sorry”, he kisses my cheek.

“No go and choose what we will do and the I will join you shortly”, he mentions.

“Okay”, I walk away from him going up the stairs, this sitting around thing is something I just cannot get used to no matter how much I try but it just gets to me at times, I wish that there was a way you can be safe and do everything you are used to doing than to just be cautious.

This is a city thing and it is all new to me.

I get in the room and then I seep my way through to the bathroom as I need to use it.

DUDU

It has been some time since my friend got married, I have always been worried about Busisile, always tried to shield her from things that hurt her but she proves to be a bit strong to me. I knew that she was well taken care of in the Ntuli household more than her home. Her parents are just...something else, I don't know how to describe it but they are just something that I cannot really reckon with.

I miss my friend though, I miss being in her presence and I know that we cannot be just like before because she is now a married woman and married women have to seep away from their unmarried friends.

I have a bowel full of soft porridge with a trey and some tea as well as I make my way to him and place it in front of him.

I shy away from him as soon as he thanks me with a smile and I turn away.

"Join me", he mentions.

I look at him.

"I..."

“Come Dudu”, he says.

The softness from his voice reminds me of my best friend.

I pull a grass mat and join him on the floor as he has his meal. I watch the exact male replica of Busisile, he is beautiful and could pass up as a woman if needed to be but his bone structure gives it away that he is a man. He licks his lips and he places the porridge down and goes to the tea and takes a gulp in it and he turns to looking at me.

“Ngiyabonga Mfazi wami”, he says and I blush.

“Yebo”, he always calls me that or says that since we were young.

“Do you miss her?”, I say and he stops eating and sighs.

“Everyday”

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he says and pauses for a moment before he turns to me.

“You know I love my sister”, he says.

“Yes I know”

“Am I a horrible person?”, never, he can never be.

“You are not a horrible person, you are as sweet as her”, he mentions.

“I know its tradition but at times I just miss her home”, he mentions.

“I know”, I say trying to comfort him.

He goes back to his eating and then he finishes. He gets up and I take everything.

“Ngiyabonga Dudu”, he says staring at me and I look at him before shying away.

“It’s okay, I will see you in the afternoon”, I mention and he nods.

“Okay”, he takes his stick and he is on his way to the field. I watch him as he disappears.

My best friend’s brother. The man who makes my heart skip a beat at his presence, I vowed to atleast take care of him for her. I turn and walk back inside the house and I wash the dishes. My sister has already left so I am all alone.

MABUTHO

I watch her as she lays beside me clinging on my top as she is rested. The tv seems to have put her to sleep, but I have also learnt that she sleeps once she has been fully fed and so that could also be the case. I position her properly so that she doesn’t get disturbed and sleeps well before I kiss her forehead and I get off the bed and take my phone before I walk out of

the room. My business is making some progress, yes it is very exhausting to start all over but this is for me and something that I had started all on my own without the start up from my father, yes it will take some time to get where the old farm was but I am still determined that everything will have its time and it will reach the place where it is supposed to be.

I walk down the stairs and everyone has left, they went to gift Mandisa and the baby, I haven't neglected them, I just have to give the same amount of attention to my woman. Yes I will be present in the child's life and that is all. I don't want Mandisa thinking the child will bring us somehow back together. I don't hate her, nor have a problem with her. She has never wronged me but things are just not the same anymore.

My phone rings and it is my brother. I answer it.

"Bhuti"

"Hey, we are at the farm, buying the goat for Saturday."

"Okay, what are they saying?"

"A lot of things, I want to send a few pictures of the options we have", he mentions"

"Okay, that's fine", I say.

"Okay then, we will talk just now", he mentions before he hangs up.

I want what is best for Mabusi, and my children as well. Do I see a future with her? Most definitely without any doubt.

I receive a message from my brother and I sigh, I have to do what is right for my children and this woman and myself.

IMINATHI

I am back at res and with the tests and on going assignments I really have less time to actually spend with this man but we do get to talk a lot during the day and he wishes a good night too. I am dating someone, I don't know how I should describe the relationship that I have with Bongani but I am really learning from it.

I just got back at res after my classes and I am very tired at the moment. I get in my room and throw myself on the bed and I remove any of the pillows that are disturbing me at the moment.

My phone rings and I take it, its Bongani. I told him when I will be free so that is why he is calling.

I answer it.

"Sthandwa sami", he says and I blush.

"Hey"

"I miss you, how are you?"

“I am okay, just tired”, I say.

“So coming by there is not an option”

“Please do come”, yes being in his company might do me some good.

“Okay, I will be there very soon, rest. I will call you when I am outside”

“Okay, bye”

“I love you”, I blush before he hangs up.

I roll on the bed and I feel like wearing that top I took from his closet.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 32

IMINATHI

The sleep was too short lived and before I knew it, I had to leave and meet this man, I didn't really change much because he didn't mention that we would be going somewhere decent so I just wore casually and went up to him. The afternoon cold breeze was kicking in as I rushed to this man's car and got inside shutting the door and the warmth was felt from the car is welcomed.

"Hello", I say and he looks at me and smiles.

"Wasumuhle kangaka mfana wami(Why are you this beautiful my boy)", he says and I laugh pushing him away from me playfully.

"You are really testing me", I say as he chuckles.

"I didn't even notice that I lost these clothes too", he says.

"I am sorry, I took them the day I was visiting"

"uyazitapela ezintweni zami nje mama(You are taking as you like from my things mama", he says and I shake my head.

I find myself laying my head on his shoulder.

"I missed seeing you", I say truthfully.

“I missed you too Sthandwa sami, at times I felt like coming to fetch you but I know you have school work”, He says.

“Mmmh”, the comfortable silence consumes the car and he brushes my braids with his fingers.

I enjoy this, I will not lie at all. I really do.

“I am free this weekend”, I mention and then I sit up to look at him.

“What do you want us to do?”, he asks.

“I don’t know, maybe do a picnic or paint or go for lunch or...”

“I have never painted before”, he mentions and I smile.

“Me too, but we can try. We don’t have to be perfect. We just need to enjoy”, I say.

“Okay, you can plan it and I will send the money”

“We can maybe do it at your backyard since you have some space”, I say.

“Okay , I am okay with that”

He leans in and gives me a kiss and I giggle.

“You are so random”

“But you like it”, I laugh and I kiss him back and before we know it. We are deepening the kiss.

The tender texture of his lips against mine, fills up the warmth inside of me. His warm hand against my semi cold skin as his lips are attached to mine enhances any feelings that I am feeling, lust, desire and many more at the same time that I cannot even comprehend which one I am feeling the most at this moment.

We soon break the kiss and I catch my breath before I find him staring at me and he smiles.

“I cant wait to marry you”, he mentions and I swallow.

“You are sure”, I say.

Yes I realise that things happen in a relationship.

“Yes, I know what I want for us and where I would like this to end up”, he says and I smile.

I couldn't help myself.

DUDU

The water has been fetched from the river and all hope of me maybe seeing Busisile has run very low these past few months and now I have just accepted that I would never see her again. My sister will be well on her way back from the market pretty soon but she should've been back way earlier than now. maybe she is with her boyfriend, yes she has one and she is trying to keep it a secret from me but I already have my suspicions and I

know that my assumptions are very accurate. It is no secret that I cook for Busisile's brother on his way to his work place and back when he goes home. I know I am a food stop so that he gets something he can eat. He doesn't eat much, they really didn't have much to eat on. One of the reasons why when Babu'Ntuli chose Busisile, her parents didn't hesitate but took the opportunity to try and better themselves and their child's lives. I mean he does have pretty kids that are educated too. I am sure Busisile doesn't get tired and goes into not having anything in that house hold.

I am in the kitchen, I have just finished cooking and I am dishing up the meal for tonight for me and my sister and also the man that will pass here any minute.

I hear a knock on the door and I go to it and he is standing there, sweaty from a hard day of working and his overalls that have lost its colour years ago shows some soil dirt. The farm is tiresome. The chief overworks his workers for little pay. I know it is little. I have never really been to the Ntuli farm before but it is not here. he used to have one with the chief but he sold his share to the chief.

"Hey, come in", I say moving from the door and he comes inside taking off his shoes and he sits on the bench that is next to the wall.

I light up the lantern and then turn to him.

“How was the day at the farm today?”, I ask before I move to get a jug of water for him to down something down.

I give it to him.

“Thank you, it was long. The chief had an announcement today”, he says and I get him his meal and a dish to wash his hands in.

“What did he say?”, I hear him heave a sigh.

I go and get him to wash his hands before I get his meal.

“He said that he is going to let go of some workers soon”, he says and I feel sad.

“Why?”

“New machines”, he says. Technology is really destroying jobs for us.

I give him his food and he thanks me.

“Do not worry, you will not loose it”, I say feeling sad as he does.

“You think so?”

“You are an asset Mbheki, I think that’s something”, I say and he smiles before he starts eating.

“You cooking so nicely, I love your food”, he mentions for I don’t know how many times and I blush for the hundredth time.

“Thank you”, I say.

“How was your day?”, he asks.

“I went to wash some few blankets for a few people”, I say.

He looks at me.

“Did everyone pay you?”, he asks and I nod my head.

I am lying, I only got two payments out of 4 but I don’t want any drama honestly.

“Where is your sister?”

“With her boyfriend maybe”

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I say.

He nods his head. I get my food and join him in eating. He finishes his food.

“Thank you, it was delicious”, I giggle.

“My pleasure”

“I have to go before it gets dark on the way”, he says and stands up with his dish. I quickly do the same and take it away from him.

“Okay, let me walk you out”, I say and he thanks me.

We walk out of the house and he stops for a while and turns to me.

“I have a friend, he lives in the city. I am have been thinking of moving there for better things and a better job”, he mentions and my heart breaks.

“Ohw”, he wants to leave.

“What...What have your parents said?”

“I haven’t told them yet but I am thinking Dudu”, he says and I nod my head biting my bottom lip”.

“You...you can go and try”,I say.

“Do you want to come with me?”, he says and I look at him.

“Me?”

“Yes”, he stares down at me.

“I...I....I don’t know Mbheki, I will have to speak to my sister about this”, I say and he nods.

“It is okay, I understand”, I nod my head and he gives me a smile.

“Stay well”

“Travel well”, he waits for me and I turn around and go back inside the house locking the door before I peak through the kitchen curtain and he is still standing staring at the house before he turns and walks off.

I watch him until he disappears,

and I close the curtain and sigh. What does this mean? Does he really want to move with me?

BUSISILE

Time really passes by fast, my pregnancy is developing really in a way that I can only adjust to it for a few moments and then it turns. I am used to now eating a lot and about anything and sleeping for some time after having certain meals but now I cant stomach some foods.

It is Saturday and today we are going to the Ntuli house hold and I am really nervous. Mandisa will be here too with the baby, everything that needs to be done for the baby is here too. Mabutho just wants to fix our problem and also the child's issues in one go so that everything can resume right after.

MaThabethe called her husband and told him that we are coming so he is expecting us but I am not sure how he will welcome us and I understand that we are not welcome in his home yard.

It has been what? A very few months since I came here and back then I was just a skinny girl who just found out that she is pregnant with her step son's child while now I have gained weight. Something I have been struggling most of my life to do but then I get pregnant through a boy and all my struggles have vanished in that department.

We are about to enter the Ntuli yards, Mabutho is driving and his mother with his brother are seated at the back in this car while Mandisa is travelling in another car with Mabutho's other brother. My feet hurt, that is another thing that I have just discovered in this pregnancy is that my feet can hurt really bad now and swell up. I hate that, I really do.

"Mabusi, you are awake", MaThabethe announces me from sleep valley.

"Yes ma"

"For a second I thought Mabutho did something to you", I turn to Mabutho.

"What would I do to my girlfriend ma"

"We don't know, anything is possible with men these days", she says.

"You mean your husband"

"Eyi wena that's still your father", she claps back.

The Ntuli house hold can be seen from where we are. Mabutho takes a deep breath and we arrive there. MaKhumalo is the first one to step out and stand outside on the veranda and then MaGasa and MaJili follow after that. I swallow.

When we left here, only a few knew that I was pregnant off Mabutho but I am sure they still remember that I am pregnant. Now it is time to face the music. Mabutho parks the car and then he gets out and so as MaThabethe.

“Hawu wabuya dade nesquad sakho!(You have come back my sister with your squad!)”, MaKhumalo says and MaThabethe looks at their way.

“Yes, my husband has been begging for my return!”, she smiles after and MaKhumalo is not happy by the looks in hearing that.

“Ma”, Phumlani says to his mother.

“What? Isnt it she likes to talk too much”, MaThabethe mentions.

Mabutho helps me out of the car and then MaKhumalo claps her hands.

“Heeeh Jesu!”, she claps her hands again.

He goes and gets Mandisa too.

“Ayi sobuka ibiskop namhlanje(We are going to watch a movie today)”, MaGasa says.

MaJili is already gone and we see her resurfacing with Mphembe and I look at the floor.

“Bathabile”, the happiness in seeing MaThabethe cannot be missed as he makes his way towards his wife.

“You are back”

“Not for long”, she says and the little joy is short lived I guess.

“I am happy to see you. I will sleep in your room today”, he says and the other wives are not happy to hear that.

“I didn’t come alone Ndu”, she says. I look up and find him staring into her eyes.

It showed that we didn’t even matter at that moment.

“Meet Your grand child”, she says pulling Mandisa closer to her and taking the little baby and Mphembe looks at the baby then he turns to finally notice us. He is not happy, the glimpse of joy he was having is gone and I swallowed. The man next to me is not making things any easier with his silence. I don’t know If I should greet or keep my silence.

“I need to take some medication”, Mphembe mentions and walks away from us leaving us here.

MaThabethe keeps her silence as well before she speaks.

“Come let’s go inside”

“Ma Talk to your man”, Bongani says.

“Ayi indoda ka MaKhumalo”, she says

“You are still married to him”, she keeps quiet.

We get inside the house and she settles us before she turns to go and look for Mphembe.

“I am going to the car, will you be okay?”, Mabutho asks and I nod.

He asks Mandisa too who nods before he walks away and silence has consumed the room. It is so quiet like there are no kids in this family.

“So you think that after getting another woman’s man that life is sweet?”, Mandisa speaks and looks at me.

“Pardon?”

“You heard me”, I keep my silence.

“Even if you keep quiet, it wont take away how evil you are from taking the father of my child away from me and my daughter”, she says.

“I did...”

“I don’t want to hear it, know that karma knows people’s addresses”, she says and I swallow before she clicks her tongue.

MAMNCANE

CHAPTER 33

Being in the presence of Mandisa has not even been a comfortable person to sit with just in that short while that we were left together. MaKhumalo entered the room and she went over to Mandisa.

“This is the new child sisi?”, she says and she Mandisa nods.

“Yebo ma”

“I am Mabutho’s Mamkhulu, Makhumalo”

“I am Mandisa”

“Can I hold the little Ntuli?”, she asks and Mandisa hands over her daughter to MaKhumalo.

“Awuboni nje, ingane ka gogo”, she says to the baby. Mandisa looks over to them.

“Fanele usheshe ulamanise(You have to quickly get another baby)”, MaKhumalo mentions and Mandisa lightly laughs.

“I am sure in the father’s side it is sorted”, she looked over to me and I just looked away from her.

“Mmmh”, she keeps on playing with the baby.

“How is the pregnancy going MaSibisi, you last ran away from here so we don’t have updates”, MaKhumalo says and she is not even looking at me.

“It is going okay”, I settle for that.

“Mmmh”

“I need the bathroom”, I quickly get up and I leave the room. I don’t know how everything is going to go but I am hoping that everything goes on quickly.

Mabutho is outside with his brother by the cars and they are taking out our bags at that moment.

Bongani seems to be on the phone but soon enough he hangs up and he turns to Mabutho who is closing the car door.

“You love this woman heh?”, Mabutho asks and his brother shys away from him.

“Did you take everything?”

“You know your father will have a heart attack”

“I don’t care”, Bongani replies.

“I love Nathi and if anyone in this family cannot take it then I don’t care”

“Good for you”, I reach them and Mabutho places everything on the floor and looks at me.

“What is wrong baby?”

“Can I avoid being in the same room with Mandisa and MaKhumalo?”

“What did Mandisa say?”, he has a frown on his face.

“Nothing, I just don’t feel comfortable around her. She is hurting and seeing her just...”, Bongani excuses himself taking some of the things and he walks away.

“Don’t worry, I have talked to her and yes she is still hurting but you did nothing to her and you do not owe her anything. She was never your friend to begin with and she never will be. Don’t take what she says to heart. Can you promise me that?”, he asks.

“I... I cant say mean things”

“I am not saying mean things but tell her where she shouldn’t play around you. You are both going to be in each other’s lives whether we like it or not. You as my woman and her as the mother of my child. It will take time to adjust but promise me baby that you will not let Mandisa get to you”, I nodded my head.

“Say it Mabusi”

“I promise”, I say and he nods.

“Ngazile , mmh ingakho ubaba wakho egula nje kanti umdlela isketi egcekeni(I knew it, mmh that’s why your father has not been okay it is because you have been sleeping with his wife)”, its MaGasa.

I swear MaGasa and MaKhumalo are related some how. Not through this marriage only but somewhere else.

She is standing by the verander.

“I don’t think what I do with Busisile involves you. it is between me and her and my father”, Mabutho mentions.

He has a short temper lately.

“Kodwa still”, MaGasa says.

“Come”, Mabutho pulls me away and we walk away.

I am just realising that we just ran away from everything, we are now facing the live responses of what we have done.

“Are you okay?”, he asks and I nod.

“Yes”, he kisses my hand and I smile.

He just makes everything feel better.

.

It’s the following day, we haven’t really talked to Mphemba and we didn’t see MaThabethe this morning. Maybe she has disappeared to talk with Mphemba but then we don’t know. I

don't know how to be active or what to do in these yards but I know that since the shame that I have done I shouldn't even try like everything is okay. Even Mandisa is not allowed to do anything, she is not a Ntuli so she cannot do anything but to take care of her daughter.

Mabutho is asleep next to me and its close to 6 am in the morning. I look at him as he has his arm over my thighs.

He likes holding me when we are sleeping and I like it too, it keeps me safe and warm too. I slowly get off the bed and I quickly go and freshen up before I get dressed and I make my way out of the room. I have been thinking of one person for the longest time right now and I feel like I need her, I have neglected her too.

My feet take me out of this yard leading the path that I have known for quiet some years and after some time of walking I find the place and I stand there for a while outside looking at the place and I turn around. What am I doing here? Mabutho will be worried about me once he learns that I am not in the yard. I turn back and make my way back home, I miss being a child under my parent's wing. Yes it wasn't as easy but atleast it wasn't that complicated. I get back in the yard and already I can see some of the wives are awake. I greet and they greet back. They are not bad, just that we have never really formed a relationship.

I get to the room I use with Mabutho and he is still resting. I close the door and slide next to him in bed and close my eyes. I wish things could go well.

DUDU

Today it is a cold morning, despite the fact that it is a bit foggy outside but it is cold too. I have lit up the candle and also I have prepared the porridge for this morning. My sister is asleep, but soon she will wake up. I have ran the idea past her of going to the city and in that tip she told me that her boyfriend wants to come and ask for her hand in marriage.

It has been stressful for the both of us. I know that she would just take her bags and join her man's family but also things should be done right and I don't see our family doing that. They abounded us a long time ago and I don't even know where we could start if we have to look for them.

The porridge is ready and I have dished up for 3 people and let the hot substance cool down. The knock on the door let's me know that he has arrived. I run my fingers over my dress and my jersey and then I go and open the door and he stands in front of me. He smiles and he doesn't seem like he is going to the fields.

Yes he was one of the people that were let go and I feel like I could do something to help him. Yes the job at the farm didn't

do much but it brought something for him too to contribute to his family too and take care of himself as well.

“Hello”, I greet and he smiles.

“Good morning, how are you?”, he says and I let him in.

“I am well, you are going somewhere today?”, I say and he sits on the bench that is against the wall.

“Yes, to the shops to get some last things before I leave to the city, I just need something to carry what I have”, he says and I nod my head and give him his food and he thanks me.

“Have you thought about it?”

“Yes, I have”, he starts eating. I don’t want to lie, I am scared. Mostly I have been skeptical with leaving my sister but she is about to start a new life and I will be left here all alone.

“What do you say? You know I am not forcing you to do anything”, he says and I nod my head before I sigh.

“Yes I know. “, he nods his head and carries on eating.

“I will leave with you”, I say and he stops eating looking at me.

“Really?”

“Yes”

He stands up leaving his meal and he comes towards me.

“I promise you will not regret this decision”, he says and I look at him before I shy away.

“Okay”

“Is your sister here?”, he asks.

“Yes, she is sleeping in the other room”

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he nods his head.

He takes my hands into his hands and he holds them.

“Don’t worry, everything will be okay”, I trust him.

NARRATED

Bathabile cannot even move out of the bed with this man holding onto her for dear life as she wants to wake up. How did he enter this room? Last night he came knocking on the door to be let in but she refused for him to come in but here he is snoring lightly as he is rested next to his beloved wife. Peace, is what he feels. He feels like the ancestors have answered his silent pleas of bringing his wife back into the yards. The little grudge over his son and young wife is a bit gone mainly because he almost lost a long term marriage over something he thought he could recreate with the young one.

She removes his hand and shakes him from his sleep.

“Ndumezulu”, she says and it takes a bit of time for him to wake up.

Where did this man go? The fierce yet handsome man she once fell in love with, yes he is still handsome but soon the wrinkles will cover that youth that was once there.

He stares into the eyes of the woman he loves dearly and he smiles as he sees that it is not a dream for the fact that he woke up next to her this morning. She frowns as she watches him staring at her.

“What are you doing here? how did you get in here?”, she asks.

“I came in when you were asleep”

“Please leave”, he sits up when she tries to chase him out.

“Sthandwa sami ngicela sikhulume(my love can we talk)”, he says as he tries to hold her hand.

“We have talked enough Ndu”, she shortens the name.

“Please, I have had time to evaluate on the kids issue and we can talk and find a common ground and I could try and forgive them”, he says.

“That is great for you Ndumezulu, mina it doesn't involve me. I warned you and you thought I was joking when I said I will not be with an abuser”, she says and his heart aches.

“Tell me what I can do to rectify everything. I will do anything Sthandwa sami”, he is begging, pleading with his love.

He thought that forgiving Busisile and Mabutho will be a way to going back into her heart and having her back home but it seems like it is not.

“Anything?”, she is thinking.

“Yes anything”, he says, he would give up the whole world if he has too.

“Okay, I want a house in Ballito”, he says and he frowns.

“Why would you want to stay there when we have a home here?”, he asks. He doesn’t understand.

“That’s the only way I can forgive you and some money too”

“Bathabile...”, is she planning an escape and blocking him out of her life forever?

“That’s all I want then I will come back”, she says and he looks at her.

“uyafunga?(You promise?)”

“Ngiyagomela(I promise)”, she gives him a light perk to seal the deal and his heart is over joyed.

“Okay”, he says.

He has to keep this from the other wives, they cannot know that he is going to buy an expensive house in Durban and give some amounts to MaThabethe and not for them.

BUSISILE

Its getting a bit busy now, everyone is awake. Eating, getting dressed and also some are just preparing for imbeleko for Zamamphemba. The yard is buzzing as it always does during early hours of morning. I am stuck in this room and Mabutho left some while ago after getting something for us to eat. I am scared, as much as I know the reason why we are here but I feel scared more than anything. I haven't seen Mphembe since yesterday when he left after the mentioning of Mabutho's daughter and I really do not blame his actions so as Mandisa. It was bound to happen and the way they are reacting is very valid at this point.

I hear a knock on the door and I get off the bed and make my way to the door and I open it. It is MaThabethe.

"Hello sisi, why are you locking yourself in here?", she walks into the room and she sits down on the bed.

"I was going to come out soon"

"Don't worry, the old man wont bite. I am taming him. how is my grandchild?", I smile and rub my stomach.

"He is good"

“That’s good, don’t worry things will be okay”

“I am worried ma, I wont lie and I acknowledge what Mabutho and I have done”

“That’s all that matters”, the door opens and Mabutho walks in.

“Hey”, he greets and I smile.

“I am here to see you actually, I have news”, MaThabethe says.

“What news?”

“Close the door behind you”, he does that.

“What is it ma?”, he asks.

“I got your father to greet to buying a house in Ballito for me”

“That’s great”, he says not much interested.

“Can you be interested? You are a father now. You cant be cramping my sister and her children you guys need your own space to do stuff and make more babies”, I shy away and Mabutho frowns.

“We are not taking anything from that man”

“Its from me”

“What did you say to him for him to even agree to say that”

“Phela eyami iyadayisa groot(My coochie sells good)”, she says and I gasp lightly and Mabutho frowns.

“Ma!”

“Just take it Mabutho and stop with your big head. Take Mabusi to the beach. Iyofa nini ingane yabantu niyihluphekisa sikhona ayi(When will this child die while you are making her suffer while we are here)”, she stands up and walks out.

He paces up and down the room.

“Calm down, you will talk to her later”

he breathes out and comes towards me and he pulls me closer to him.

“Are you hungry?”, I am a little but I wont eat now.

“No, not yet”

“Okay tell me when you are hungry”, he says and I nod my head and smile at him.

“Everything will be alright”

“You think so?”

“Yes”

“Even if we live in a shack?”

“Yes, I love you”, he smiles and kisses my lips.

“That will not happen but I love you too”, I giggle.

“What do you hope for?”, He asks looking at me.

“A healthy baby”

“Me too, after the baby. We will get married and live happily”

He slowly moves me around and I giggle.

“And then you will go and study like you have wanted to”, he says and kisses my neck.

I smile, I hope so. I hope that God remembers us.

.

We soon left the room and I was well on my way to the kitchen while Mabutho had to go with his brother to sort out the goat issue for the ceremony. I am trying by all means to avoid Mandisa as much as I can but also I am trying to not make it seem like I am avoiding some people. MaThabathe is once more lost again and so as Mphembe and the kids are running around. I guess they do not have school today. I just wonder how Dudu is doing now.

MAMNCNE

CHAPTER 34

The smoke, almost had me when the incense was blown in the direction of the Goats and sheep that are in front of us. Mandisa is stuck outside of this big rondaval that can accommodate more people. She is not a Ntuli after all and I? I am here because I am one and also I am here to apologize of the infidelity that Mabutho and I brought into this family. The women on one side and the male on the other side. Yes the Varsity freaks are also here. Not all of them but they are here and the younger ones are giving me stares. They don't like me and it is very clear that they will never like me or try to accommodate my presence in this life.

Mabutho is called by his father to the front. He introduced his daughter to the ancestors and gave her the official name of Zamamphemba and she wailed until her new granny took her, MaKhumalo.

She has the baby cradled in her arms. She is her grandmother after all. She is attached to the baby or should I say that she is attached to the mother more than the baby. She loves Mandisa and that is no shame. She didn't hide it for that matter and I am not against it but just shedding some light.

“Speak Mabutho”, His father says.

We haven't really sat down properly and talked. All he said was that we can do the apology ceremony and he accepts it.

I didn't get time to actually stand in front of him and apologise.

Yes I am sincere in that, I do apologize for being sneaky and doing this to him when I should've told him from the get go that I also would have an interest in his son.

Mphemba seems a bit happy these days. Full too, he doesn't want to be fed by anyone beside MaThabethe. Following her like a lost puppy and some wives were not pleased with that, I guess they were happy that her presence was not needed here but she is staying. That I know.

I look at her as she is seated next to me with a scarf around her shoulders. She loves her children so much, more than the man she met before her children. There is nothing not beautiful about this woman and I admire and am grateful for her kind heart towards me too.

"Yebo baba", Mabutho says and moves closer with the animal and I am holding onto my scarf as well.

The incense is not suffocating me usually but today it has a smell that I really do not like but will tolerate for this stay.

Mabutho speaks to his ancestors. Mentioning my name and his with his father in the mix. Yes they know me as well. I was introduced into this very place when I was taken by Mphemba.

He is done and he moves away and his father speaks and after that we are all to be dismissed. The male species going to cut open these animals and I watch them pull them away for them to go and take their last breath. Makhumalo is rushing to her room. I am sure she is going to teach Mandisa a few bible verses here and there that she doesn't understand. I was once shocked to learn she has one because she only uses it when she wants to misquote a verse from the bible.

“Everything is going to be okay right now”, MaThabethe says as she stands next to me and I nod.

The ladies move to the kitchen to check on the steam bread that was made. Two big pots full too.

As everyone leaves I stand by the rondaval and wait for Mphemba to walk out and he does. He stops for a while as he realises that I am standing there and doesn't say anything I also swallow.

“MaSibisi”, He says as he lets out a light nod.

“Baba”, I don't know how to address him.

“Kuhamba Kahle(Is everything okay?)”

“Yes”, He nods his head.

The silence is something that I needed to gain strength from before I speak to him.

“I would like to apologize...” ,He cuts me through.

“It is okay Busisile” ,He says and my heart starts beating fast.

“I...”

“I loved you because I saw MaThabethe in you, the younger version and thought that I would feel youthful with you once again” ,I nod my head.

“But that is not the case anymore. I realised that growing old should be it” ,He says.

“Than....thank you” ,I say.

“How is the pregnancy treating you? Walk with me” ,He says and starts walking and we walk together.

“The pregnancy is going well”

“Uthini uMabutho ngalento yenu(What is Mabutho saying about this thing of yours?)”

“We are taking slow steps” I don't know how to feel that I am gossiping about Mabutho to his father.

“He should know soon, I didn't raise him this way” ,I nod my head

“Yebo baba”

“Okay, you can go” ,I thank the Gods. I move away from him quickly and go to the main house.

Everyone is in the kitchen except Mandisa.

“Go and rest Busi”, MaThabethe says.

“I can help ma”

“No”, She says.

“Babusa ondlavini!”, MaGasa says.

I ignore her and make my way to the living room and Mandisa is there. I turn around when I see her and just walk away.

I do not want to be in the same room as her until I have the courage to be able to face her.

DUDU

I did some washing, I don't want to leave my sister in a mess and I know she doesn't have a problem. Our home will be closed and we will both be leaving. I cannot believe it, I hope that everything that is there in the city is atleast better than here. Something to look forward for.

I am at the river and I have just hung the blankets I was washing on the rocks and the clothes are also washed as well. I am just sitting now on the rocks waiting for the washing to get dry when I see Mbheki making his way towards where I am. He is taking slow strides but they are making him reach me faster as he is tall with long legs. He gets to me and he smiles looking down on me.

“Sawubona,I was looking for you and your sister told me you are here”,he says.

“Yes, I am just doing some washing before I leave”,I say and he nods before he sits down on the rock next to me and I shift a bit.

“Are you scared of me?”,He asks.

No, I think parts of my body get weak when you are next to me.

“No”

“Please look at me Dudu”,He says and I swallow before I turn my head to look at him and he stares back at me.

“You are beautiful, inside and outside and I am glad that we have each other”,He says and I smile.

“Me too”,I say.

He smiles, my best friend pops up from that smile just by watching him. I look away from him and then we both stare at the river.

“The water sounds are calming”,I say.

“Very”

We keep our silence.I like this silence.

He lets me rest my head on his shoulder and he takes a little peak at my face and he brushes my cheek with his free hand before he stops and we go back to staring at the river.

NARRATED

It has been some time now since he came home, Bongani that is and he feels like his family is hindering him from speaking to his woman every chance he gets. Yes Nkosinathi and Phumlani with Mabutho know about Iminathi, his Xhosa Angel that he loves do very dearly in his heart but his other relatives do not know and he doesn't know how they would be accepting of her especially his father considering that he is a very traditional man. He doesn't care about that, he knows what he wants and his heart is telling him to love this woman with his whole being.

He moves away from his brothers with his blooded hands and he goes to the tap leaving them proceeding with the animals and he washes his hands at the tap and wipes his hands with his top and takes out his phone and dials her number at the top of his head.

He has memorised it. It is a very important number that he can recite even in his sleep.

“Baby”, He hears her voice and he smiles automatically to it.

It gets to him, that voice that he has heard more than a hundred times but there is something special when he calls him like that. Her special person, those are his thoughts.

“Themba Lami

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ngifisa ukube ula emagcekeni uphithizela njengabonke abafazi balayikhaya ngibone ubuso bakho (I wish you were here in these yards running around like all of the wives here, seeing your face)”, he says.

She is blushing on the other side, rolling over the books that are scattered on her single bed almost making her fall off it. Her roommate is giving her a questionable look at that moment.

“Baby ndino roomza toho (I am with my roommate baby)”, She warns as she melts.

“How long are we doing this little dating what what? I want to marry you now”, He says.

He places his hand behind his back as his body faces the beautiful view of the landscape.

He can even send all his brothers and father by force to the Eastern Cape to get his wife for him and all will break loose if they do not do that.

“Baby,I don't even know how my brothers will feel when they hear that I am to wed someone”,He says.

“Its part of life. We will grow our own family”

“I know, how is everything there?”,She is diverting from the topic.

Not that she doesn't want to get married but she is treated like a little princess at home and leaving her dad is something she doesn't know where she would start with.

“Ngiyakuzwa mama, kuhambe Kahle(I hear you mama, everything went well)”,he says.

“Thats good”

“I love you Nathi”,He says and her heart is pinned against the the other organs around it.

“Uthandwa ndim muntu wami(You are lived by me)”

He sees one of his mother's approaching.

“I will call you later”,He says and they end the call.

He is satisfied. Though that was a very short call but he will have a lengthy one later.

They have been dating for some time, yes it is short but it is some time. Why can't they get to know each other while they are married and in their house, yes he will make sure she

doesn't get pregnant until they are both ready but he wants to wake up next to his wife, call his wife every second and have her in these family gatherings. He looks like a lost sheep coming here alone without his companion.

On the other hand Iminathi rests in her back as she looks up at the ceiling after the phone call, in a short space of time she feels so secure and sure about Bongani but she is scared too. Something scare her even though she knows that some things shouldn't be scaring her but she loves this man and possibly sees a future with him. Is she forward?

“Thinking of your man?”,The roommate asks and she turns to her.

“Yes, can I ask? Is it bad that I want to marry this man one day?”,She asks.

She doesn't know, she has never received a proposal before. Well those ones that are not serious she knows.

“We feel like that when in love”

“Okay, I think I want to spend the rest of my life with him”

“If he feels the same way”,the roommate replies.

“He does”

“Thats good”,She looks at her phone and types a message and places her phone in flight mode after sending that message.

'I will love to spend the rest of my life with you Bongani', He looks at it as his phone is still in his hand.

"Bongani ngicela usinake please (please can you pay attention to us)", it's MaJili speaking.

She has been speaking to him for the past minute but now he is not listening.

"Haibo Bongani your mother is talking!", MaThabethe says.

"I need to go, I will see you", He tries to call Iminathi but she doesn't go through.

He leaves the kitchen with everyone wondering what is going on.

"It's your son MaKhumalo", MaGasa says.

"Haibo Mphemba should talk to him", MaKhumalo liked Bongani, manily because he resembled Nkosinathi. She liked him.

He tries again and the phone doesn't go through and before he knows it, he is cursing.

He wants to know what she means, she is accepting the proposal or what? He wants to know.

BUSISILE

The bedroom door opens and this bloody man walks in. He has blood over his top. He takes it off and he is left without anything on top. He wipes his hands with it and they seem clean and he closes the door before he comes to me. I am just seated in bed and I am not in the kitchen because of MaThabethe and I don't want to bond over vile words exchanged with Mandisa so I would rather be stuck here.

“Sthandwa sami”, he comes and leans in to perk my lips.

“Baby”

“How are you feeling?”

“Good, I spoke to Mphemba”, He frowns.

He still is not over his little thing with his father.

“What did he say?”

“I just wanted to formally apologise and he told me why he liked me”

“And?”, He asks. He is not pleased that I spoke to Mphemba but his curiosity has the best of him, he wants me to continue.

“He said he loved me because I reminded him of your mother in her youthful days”

“Mmmh”, He says and sits on the bed and he pulls me to him and I place my hand on my stomach.

“When will this little one start kicking”,He says and he places his hand on my stomach.

“In Due time”

“I am tired, I want to take a quick nap”,He says.

“Should I prepare some water for you to bath?”

“No baby, it's fine. I will bath after”,I nod my head and he kisses my lips.

“I love you Mabusi”

“I love you to Mabutho”,He smiles.

He lays down on his back and I watch him as he tries to rest.

IMINATHI

He is here, I was called by the security guard to inform me that someone is looking for me and it is a man. I was confused at first at which man it could be but curiosity got the better of me to go and see who it is at this now late hour and it is him. I thought he was away and wouldn't be back until the next two days but here he is standing near the gate wearing overalls like he had just come from a heavy duty in a ceremony. The cold room operator or the meat distributor. Either way he is here and I can't even comprehend the look on his face. I reach him and I am feeling nervous but I tell myself that I shouldn't be.

“What are you doing here?”, I ask.

I don't know what to say honestly.

“I am here about the message that you sent earlier on”, what? Did he have to drive all the way coming here?

“Oh that?”, He nods his head.

“What does it mean mama?”, He asks.

I step closer to him and he looks at me as I stare back at him.

“I like your outfit”, I say.

“Nathi”

“I love you Bonga”,I say.

“I love you too, you know that baby”,I blush.

I shy away from his gaze.

“Do you want to marry be one day?”,The question he asks.

Yes I wanted him to ask me, I was afraid of just saying it out there and embarrass myself.

“Yes,I would love to”.

“When can I send my family to your family?”,Is this an official proposal?

“Are you proposing?”,I ask tilting my head to the side.

“I am taking a decision with you”,Argh this man.

“I don't know, it's up to you”,My mouth runs.

I am taking impulsive decisions right now.

He wraps his arms around my waist and perks my lips.

I want to kiss him, I want to feel his tender lips devour mine in the process. I find myself kissing him and he is kissing me back, his lips pressed against mine and to the rhythm of exchange I suck on his lips as he does on mine. Not caring on who could be watching me kissing this man. After all he is my man.

We break the kiss and he gives off a smirk and it's a bit devious.

“In 3 weeks my family is going to the Eastern cape”,He is not asking me but he has made that decision.

Surprisingly I have accepted it.

“Okay”

“I love you Nathi”,He says.

I look at him and I smile.

“Let's go and eat something. I am hungry”

“Wait, can I tell you something?”,He says.

“What is it?”

“My family is very huge, I am not including any family like cousins and all of that. I just mean my siblings , my father and his wives. We are huge and I don't want you to be overwhelmed. Don't be intimidated by them and tell me.if they bother you”,No one will try me.

“I will, how many siblings do you really have?”

“28 siblings”,What?! That's a whole creche.

“Ohw, that's alot”,I don't know if I will remember everyone. I will just say Mntase to everyone I see.

“Okay we can go and grab something to eat. I miss your cooking”, he says.

“I am lazy to cook these days”, I say and he chuckles.

He lets go of my waist and we walk to his car and we get inside before he drives off. I cannot believe what just happened.

BUSISILE

Mabutho has been asleep since he came back and I have been up and doing quiet nothing than to entertain myself through YouTube on Mabutho's phone while he is asleep. I log out of YouTube and I look at him and he is sound asleep. I understand why he is tired, it has been a hectic couple of months all together and he needs to rest and also just take a breather for a moment. I pull the blanket up to my waist and he shifts a bit. Any little Movement just makes him shift somehow.

I should maybe go and see how everyone else is doing than to keep myself locked in here until when.

I also haven't seen Sisi, Lethu in a long time too and I wonder how she is doing honestly.

“You are thinking too much”, I look at the man who is next to me and he is looking at me. It shows that he has just opened his eyes.

“Mmmh?”.

“What are you thinking off?”

“Lethu, how she is”

“She is okay, to we might visit then if you want to ”

“Maybe when we get back home”,I say and he nods.

”Let me go and prepare some food for you”,I say.

“I am not hungry yet, Busi. Stop worrying too much”

“Mabutho I am just trying to help”,He nods his head and places his hand on my stomach.

”I like this”,He says.

“What?”,I ask as he traces his fingers on my swollen belly.

“This, us expecting and together. I just love it”,He says and I smile.

“I am happy for you”,He chuckles.

“You know we should have another baby when our lives are stable enough”,He says.

“I want to study maybe when things are okay”,I say.

“I promise you will do that, right before we have a second baby”,I smile.

“Thank you”,He trials his fingers on me.

We stay in the room for some time until I leave and I go to the main house to get something for us to eat. There is some of the

kids there and two wives. I greet and then I dish up for Mabutho and myself and then I warm the food. I wait for it.

“MaSibisi, is Zama’s mother your friend?”, One of the wives asks.

“No”, I have never been friends with Mandisa.

She nods and then let's me be. I finish up and then I go back outside to the room we are in and I give Mabutho his food and he thanks me. I get to eat my own food and he is gobbling down the food while I can't take more than 2 spoons before I feel like vomiting. I place my plate down and rush to the bathroom and I vomit. Mabutho follows after me.

“Are you okay?”, He asks and I nod my head as it is still stuck in the toilet.

“I am fine”, I say after lifting my head and he nods his head.

I flush the toilet and he gets some water for me to drink.

“Your child doesn't want me to eat”, I say and he chuckles.

“That's not good, what do you want to eat?”

“I think I just need to rest. I last slept this morning”

“Are you sure that you don't need some food before you rest?”

“No, I am fine baby. Don't worry”, he says.

“Okay”

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He helps me out of the bathroom and then he places me on the bed and I rest my head on the pillow. I will wake up a little while from now on.

DUDU

My sister is watching me as I pack the last bit of my things and I could feel my heart nesting quite fast at that moment. I am going to separate from her. That is what is making me feel nervous. She smiles as soon as my eyes land on her and I sit in the bed next to her and she comes closer.

"I know you are worried but don't, as the older one that is my Job", She says.

"I know, I don't know if I should still go", I say.

"Go, in a few days I will be gone too and who will you stay with?", She asks that question.

No one, I don't know if I will be able to visit her too.

I miss Busisile at this point. I wish I could tell her about this trip that I am taking, this change that could change my life for the worst or better.

"What if things just get worse?", I ask.

“I will be here waiting for you then to come home. Don't worry about anything.”,She says and I sigh and nod my head.

I really hope that things go accordingly or atleast things don't get bad while there.

“So you and Mbheki huh?”,I know she has been wanting to ask that question once again.

She has been asking that question since I started feeding him everytime he went to work and came back to work.

“We are just friends”,I say.

“Ayi Dudu you can't be just friends at this point.”,she says.

“I am serious”

“So you tell me that just friends make this bug move together?”

“Yes”

“Ayi angiyikholwa Leh, Kodwa you know what is happening”,she says.

We are just friends. Mbheki and I, there is no crime in being that only.

.

A new day has come and which the previous night I didn't have much sleep. Yes as much as my sister and I slept together for the last time but I didn't get to sleep well, instead I was thinking

alot. Maybe I should start to relax and actually take this leap of faith that is here. As soon as I get to get a Phone in the city, I will call my sister every day and every chance I could get. I hope that marriage treats her well. I pray that it does.

She is awake and she made some breakfast for us today. Usually I am the one who cooks because I love the kitchen and it made me happy to get those little compliments from Mbheki about my way around the kitchen, when the food was ready we ate together and I took a bath right after and wore the most decent clothes that I have. After that while I was still doing the last touch ups I heard his voice in our little home. My sister chatting up a storm with him. Usually she is asleep resting, I don't know why she sleeps that long these days but she does always when she comes back from her soon to be husband. I am glad that man is going to make an honest woman out of her.

“Let me call her, I am sure she is ready now”,She says and I hear her footsteps coming to the room.

She gets inside and stares at me smiling.

“Your boyfriend is here”

“We are just friends”

“Still, are you ready?”,She asks. No I am not ready.

“Yes”

“I love you okay, you have my number with you. Call me as soon as you can get a hold of a cell phone okay?”,She says.

“Okay, I will miss you”

“I will miss you too. Come to my wedding soon”,She says and I giggle before we share a long hug.

My mother's first born, I wish my parents were still alive to see us this far. My sister is my everything, she practically raised me.

We break the hug and I take my bag and we walk out of the room and Mbheki is seated on the bench but as soon as he sees us he stands up from it and he shares a smile our way.

“Hello Dudu”,He says first before I even reach him.

“Hello”,I say and share the same smile shying away from this man.

Yes at times he makes me shy.

“Are you ready to go? I don't want us arriving there while it's dark”,He says.

“Yes”,I say.

“Okay, Sisi. We will see you”,Mbheki says.

“Okay, take care of my sister Sibisi”,She says.

“I will, I promise”,She nods her head.

Soon we are outside and leaving this place heading to where we will catch a taxi. We are walking side by side and he starts speaking as I am a bit silent.

“You look beautiful”,He says and I look at him and blush.

“Thank you”,I say and he keeps on smiling.

“I am excited yet nervous”,he says.

“Me too, I don't know what we will see there but be hopeful for anything positive”,I say.

“Yes, everything will be just okay”,He says.

“I hope so”,I nod my head.

As we are walking cutting through the forest path where most people get their wood he changes the hand that was holding his luggage and he then grabs my hand into his and I look at him.

He smiles, this man is beautiful. My friend is really beautiful, I love their dark complexion the most too.

Busisile didn't like how slim she looked but she looked beautiful. She envied to be like me while I wished I was slim like her. I feel like I struggled slot being a big girl more than anything.

I don't say anything about the hand gesture that his brother has just done but let him be.

BUSISILE

One day left before we go home. I am glad that what we came here for has been done and now we could just go home and back to our lives. Yes back to me being a cabbage and waiting for this baby to come. I wonder how our baby will look like, maybe different from little Zama. She is a cute one too, that is for sure.

This man next to me is asleep when I wake up. He is not snoring like he was last night, I pushed him a but then so he can sleep properly and that when the siren became silent. He didn't even wake up then when I thought that he would. I guess he is taking this as a moment to rest and gain back some energy too. I get out of the bed leaving him there and I go to the bathroom. I pee before I flush and I feel like vomiting and I do so too. This pregnancy is really draining me now. Yes I hate the vomiting, I don't like it at all.

After that I went and stepped into the shower and took a quick bath then I was done. I got out of the bathroom and I found him awake but still within the blankets.

“Good morning”, I say and he looks at me and smiles.

“Good morning, why are you awake This early?”, He asks.

“What time is it?”

“It's 5 am Busi”, He says.

“Oh, old habits”, I go and lotion my body before I get dressed and get back in bed next to him.

“Let me go and wash my self too since you didn't invite me into your bathing session”

“You were asleep. I didn't want to disturb you”, I say as he sulks.

I give him a kiss on his forehead and he smiles before he gets out of bed and rushes to take a bath.

MAMNCNE

CHAPTER 36

IMINATHI

Moving is such a daunting process. I had to say goodbye to my roommate, phela the girl is going to live with her man now and I will not let that opportunity pass. That man came from another province all the way from KZN to the Eastern Cape with his family who had to meet some of my most difficult family members and had to leave his leg or arm or whatever it is but all I know is he paid mean money from Yonela's satisfaction rant after the negotiations so I have to give the man something and stay with him.

It's not like I do not want to live with him because I do, I want to actually cuddle up with him and cook for him and do everything for him as he does for me. Treat my Zulu king like a king that he is.

I am in the main bedroom and Bongani is bringing in my boxes and some of my other things from the car. As much as I lived in a small space but I do have some stuff, stuff that he bought as a start up for me when I went to res. Tell me this man is not a sweetheart?

I open the wardrobe and already he has shifted his things and opened some space for me and I am happy to see that. It gives

off an indication that he wants me here as much as I want to be here.

“Baby!” ,I hear him calling me.

He enters the main bedroom.

“I made some space for you” ,He says and wraps his arms around my waist and kisses my neck.

“I see that and I appreciate it so much baby”

“How about we move everything tomorrow to its rightful place and then tonight we go out”

“Where are we going?” ,I ask.

“Where would you like to go?”

“We can go to Spur. I am craving their ribs” ,He kisses my cheek.

“Okay my love”

“Let me help you with the rest of the things from the car”

“I am happy you are here and you are mine and I am yours” ,I turn to him and wrap my arms around his neck.

“Thank you for loving me” ,I say and give him a kiss.

He holds me close to him. Each kiss lingers with more desire.

I love this man so much and I am not going anywhere now.

BUSISILE.

This moving business is what excites me. As much as I know there will be so much work to be done but I am happy that Mabutho and I are moving into our new space. Yes the moving in will not be done in one day but atleast we will get to sleep there.

Lethu and her husband are even going to be here with us, helping us so as Mabutho's aunt too. I wish that I can share this with my family and my friend but I know that one day I will.

“What do you need to get before we go to the house?”, Mabutho asks.

“We should get some chicken and rolls and drinks for when we get tired and hungry”, I say.

“Lets go to Woolworths and get them”, I nod my head.

“Thats fine, the mall?”

“Yes baby”, I rub my stomach.

I am tired of being pregnant now. I think I will take two years off before I even think of having another child with Mabutho or maybe more years can be added and just take a break from this draining process. I enjoyed parts of it but some parts I didn't because I was one to have to be always careful at times and the people around me act paranoid. Mabutho drives to a close by

shopping centre that has Woolworths and he parks the car before he asks me if I want to go with him and I decline the offer. I want to stay here and not put my feet in a position where they will get swollen too quickly.

He agrees, he leaves the car and quickly goes inside the mall. I heard that soon we would have to go to the Ntuli's because of Bongani whom is now married. I should call Iminathi this afternoon and find out how she is, yes I did call her when the lobolo negotiations ended but I didn't dwell much on that. I just congratulated her and let her in on who and who that she will find once she goes to that homestead and MaThabethe is the least of her worries.

It takes some time before Mabutho is back from the shopping centre and he has the food with him. He puts it at the back and gives me a packet of treats and I am grateful, already my mouth is salivating on what is in front of me and I dig in.

We drive home, it sounds nice. Our new home, together and the excitement cannot be suppressed at the moment. We finally get to our place and the gate opens, the beautiful house comes into full display in front of me and already there is a car parked in front of us. Soon this car halts and I see the couple hop out of their car and wave our way and we do so as well. I haven't seen Lethu in a minute!

We get out as well and I exchange greets with the husband and with the wife I receive some hugs and some “When are you due?”, questions and some aunt compliments her way.

She receives everything and after that we make our way inside the house. Some of our things are already here, so as some of the furniture it's just a matter of arranging things and putting them into place. We will not finish today but I am hopeful that we will get majority of things done.

I get the food and take it to the kitchen and Lethu is with me too.

“Wow, I haven't seen you in a long time.”

“I have been hiding inside the house not doing anything. I miss the strawberry farm”, She giggles as we start packing some things away.

“When the baby is here, you should come with it.”, She says.

That is a good idea. I think after 3 months of heavy parenting I would need that scenery in front of my eyes.

She jokes about the baby coming out red as I enjoy strawberries and I laugh. I really do like them and Mabutho does get them for me when I am having a day where I just feel like eating them in that moment.

DUDU

I don't know how to feel, act around Mbheki as he once confessed what he meant and also the kiss. A part of my brain ignored this situation for a while but it kept coming back and haunting me in some parts of it so I couldn't ignore it.

It has been some time and this Babu'Sibisi issue is going strong. It's like the relationship between Mbheki and Mr Sibisi has grown to something stronger now.

They had some forms signed alot of things done and at this point my fear for all of this has just consumed me yet this man hasn't proven otherwise since he has come into our lives. I mean some plans might take longer. Maybe I am getting paranoid and I told myself that I should be relaxing and the Meer fact of that I should trust Mbheki and his judgement but we had just gotten to the city and already things are handed to him. It didn't give me ease at this point.

I did point out that Mbheki maybe could be related to this man, somehow. I don't know how, I mean how man Sibisi men has this man met here and haven't given all of this? To me it doesn't make any sense at all and so I think Mbheki passed on the message to this old man and they took an initiative to find out through , I don't know what but this man is coming here to this place today.

I have cooked and cleaned and also done the laundry. Tomorrow Mbheki is taking me to town to get anything I want.

He said that anything I want. I would like some clothes, the ones I have do not fit the standard of this place and yes I love my dresses but I need something new. I have a phone and I have been checking up on my sister quiet often and marriage seems to be treating her well I guess.

“Dudu”

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I hear his voice call out for me from the bathroom.

I finish up what I am doing and quickly open the door and he is standing there.

The city money seems to be cleaning him up really well at this point.

“Yes?”

“He is here”,He says.

I feel like we are together and we make major decisions together. I am only grateful that he lets me be in the decision making about his life and includes me without feeling guilty. That I really appreciate.

“Okay”

“Come”,He takes my hand into his, we walk into the living room.

The old man has been served some juice and something to nibble on. I greet and he smiles saying “Makoti”, Which only tickles Mbheki somewhere in his body as he lightly giggles to that.

I greet the old man, yes I will not be rude but I still do not fully trust this man.

We get seated soon and Mbheki and I share a couch. This man asks questions of how I have been and that Mbheki and I should visit him and also consider grandchildren for him. Mbheki and I haven't spoken that far, even a relationship hasn't been put on the table! Mbheki promises the old man those things and they share a laugh.

Soon this thing dies down and an envelope is brought forward.

“The results have come in”, The old man says.

Mbheki smiles his way.

“Whatever they say we are still related”, The old man says.

Well there it is, they might be related or not.

I am a bit confused but I do not dwell much on that.

He takes the envelope and rips it open and takes the paper out and reads it before he hands it to Mbheki who reads it too and turns it to me.

All I see are words and numbers I cannot understand. The word related catches my attention and the number 99.99% too.

Soon enough this old man has Mbheki in his arms calling him, "Ingane ka Mfowethu(my brother's child)", he draws his phone from his pocket and soon a picture is displayed.

He shows it to Mbheki who is utterly shocked at what he is seeing.

"That is ubaba", He says.

"This was before he got married. You look like your mother more", The old man says.

They are related!?

My head wraps around that but my heart soon eases at the thought of that.

"He never mentioned much of his family", Mbheki says as he stares in fascination that he has an uncle! His father's brother.

Overall this man is too trusting. What if we were scammers and we scammed him off his riches, he should be glad we were not smart like that before this whole thing.

"I am so happy to have you Mfana wami", The man is emotional and keeps on hugging this man.

This man receives it and mentions how he feels, happy too. I feel like I am invading their space here. I quickly get up but I am told to remain and so I do.

“I have a sister too”, Mbheki mentions.

“She is back home?”

“No, she got married and I haven't seen her since then”, The uncle is uncomfortable with that and mentions that Busisile will be found.

I like the sound of that, my friend being found.

Soon I go and dish up for these men as they catch up. They are happy and I am happy for them.

They eat and soon after Babu'Sibisi leaves.

Mbheki is happy.

“Thank you”

“For what?”, I ask.

“For everything Dudu, I don't know what I would be without you. I don't want to even know”, He says.

He comes and gives me a small kiss on the lips and I am taken. I blush before looking away.

“I promise to never change”, He says.

That's good to hear. I like that.

BUSISILE

The heavy moving got to me, my body couldn't take it anymore so I had to sit down while the rest carried on with their duties. I am drained now and my body really need some magical hands on them to actually get me through the rest of the day. Soon the others also take an eating break and we are now seated outside on the benches. I love this house so much, it is very beautiful and MaThabethe knew what she was doing when she chose this beautiful house.

“This house is beautiful”,Lethu compliments.

I know right?

“It is”

“My woman loves it so much”,Mabutho mentions and I smile.

I really do and I don't know how many times I have just been in awe about this place.

“Are you okay? Do you need anything?”,He asks.

“No I am fine, thank you”,I say.

He relaxes. I just need a bath and some bed if I can get that.

I cannot wait to have this baby out of me.

CHAPTER 37

IMINATHI

It's recess and I have just arrived in the Eastern Cape. I am nervous about going home to my village mainly because my father has not even called to speak to me about a letter arriving home. Yes the negotiations have been moved to the end of this week, I am nervous because I don't know if Bongani's family will be coming or not. I am mostly nervous about my brothers as well, what they will say. Yes they are married and have their lives a bit set but still I am their little one. The one whom they have been over protective off for years.

I hold onto my duffle bag as it is close to me and I watch as Kamva is waiting for me by the bus stop. I rush closer to him and he gives me a small smile. Atleast it's him, I am more nervous of the other one.

Kamva is more lenient when it came to scolding me. When I say someone has a soft spot for me I mean him out of everyone in the family. I don't mean that the others including my father are bad or mean, no that's not what I mean but I simply mean he is less overprotective and gives me some sort of freedom to find myself.

“Intombi kaNobomi! Usumhle kangaka wena?(Nobomi's girl, you are this beautiful now?)”, I giggle.

“Hey”, I say and he reaches for my things before he hugs me.

“I missed you, how are you?”

“I am well bhuti”, I say.

“Ndiyabona that means that boy you are seeing has some impact”, I swallow.

“Niyifumene?(You received it?)”, he lightly smiles.

“UYoni akonwabile tuu(Yoni is not happy)”, He says and I sigh.

“Come let's go”, He says and we go to his truck. He opens the door for me and I get in. He places my bag at the back and gets inside the car before he starts it. We wait a little while before he drives off.

“I know uk'ba ndimncinci but ndiyamthanda bhuti, ndonwabile(That I am young but I love him bhuti and I am happy)”

“Ndiyakuva Sisi, the problem is that you know some of them at home will not hear it”, I know. That's why I still have a few days to try.

“So tell me about this man, how old is he?”, He asks.

Oh hell no, I am not about to tell him that my man is over 30. I swallow.

“Bhuti ask something else”

“How old is he Nwabisa?” ,At home they use my second name. I guess to keep my mom's image alive or something like that but my father is very fond of the name my mother gave me.

“Is that important?”

“Ewe, what if lomntu ngutatomkhulu?(Yes, what if this man is a grandpa)” ,he says.

“He is not. He is just a little over 35” ,I look outside the window avoiding his eyes but I can feel his on me.

“What?”

“Thats beside the point. He is not old or has kids and you know that utata was 16 years older than umama” ,I say in my defence and he breathed out and I look at him.

“Okay, what does he do? His life and where is he from? His surname suggests that he is Zulu”

“He is” ,I say with a smile thinking about my Zulu man when he plays his guitar music and dances around while I am busy. Then he tells me how much he loves me.

“Okay”

“I know that Yonela would want me to keep marrying in my circle”

“Yes but don't mind him, this is your life. This man, tell me more about him”,He says.

It's like he has opened the flood gates for me to express how I feel about this man.

“The...the first time before we started being in the relationship he told me what he wants. He is gentle and he cares about me. I love it when he does his cultural things and I like that he doesn't see me as a child but as his equal”,I say.

“I hear you, I hope that things work out okay”

I hope so .

“Uzondinceda?(you will help me?)”

“I will try my best”,That's good enough for me.

Soon we get home and then I see my father outside working on his bike. He stops and looks at the car and leaves his tools as he makes his way towards us and I get out of the car and rush to him.

“Tata!”

“Ntombami!",we hug and I am happy to be home.

We break the hug and he looks at me with a smile.

“You have grown”,he says.

“You just saw me like some time ago”

“I was worried about you”

“I am okay now”,I say and he hugs me.

“Come inside. Your brother will bring in your bag”,We make our way inside the house.

“It is so quiet in the house”

“Umakhulu wakho went to visit her siblings”,He mentions and I nod my head.

“How is school?”,He asks.

“Great! I am doing well so far”

“Keep it up”,He says and then goes to the kitchen. He pulls a Tray from the oven and I gasp.

“You made them?”,He chuckles and I look at the lemon biscuits.

“Yes, you love them so much”,I love them because they remind me of my mother.

“Tata you didn't have to but thank you. I will eat as much as I can”,He laughs.

I grab one and then he does the same.

I love these moments with my father.

“Uphi uNwabisa!?”(where is Nwabisa?)”,I can hear Yoni saying from outside. He walks inside the house and I stand there.

I am scared of Yonela more than I am scared of anyone.

I have never really got to do much because of him and me being in KZN was all because my father had faith in me. If it was up to him he would've built a university right here in this village for me to be close to them.

“Molo bhuti”

“Uthi molo Nwabisa!?(You are saying hello Nwabisa?!)”

“Yonela sukhwazela umntana (Don't shout at the child)”

I thought I would atleast get some time to actually sit down and settle before I encounter some drama.

“Tata we need to talk about this with her”

“Yes but she had just gotten here”

“Its okay tata”,I want this over and done with.

“Who is this Ntuli? What does he want from our family? There is no relation that will happen do you hear me?”

“Why? ”

“Nwabisa, you want to get married now? Did you go to KZN to get married and find a Zulu boyfriend ”

“No, but...”

“But ntoni? You are pregnant?”, what?! I haven't even had sex with Bongani yet.

“No”

“Tell us if you are, it's okay”, I thought my dad would be as aggressive as Yoni is trying to be.

“Dad I am not pregnant. ”

“Then this won't happen”

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Yoni says then tears the letter into shreds before he throws it on the table .

“Tata”

“You are still 21 Nwabisa”

“Ndiyamthanda Tata and uyandithanda, ndiyathembisa uk'ba ndizawugqiba ifundo zami. Ndiyakucela toho(I love him dad and he loves me and I promise that I will finish my studies. Please)”

“Asuva ngawe Nwabisa!(we won't hear from you Nwabisa)”, Yoni says and I look at my father.

He doesn't say anything but I just place the baked treat down and leave the kitchen. I go to my room and I close the door before I start crying.

I hear some little commotion but I don't pay much attention to it.

I throw myself on my bed and I cry, I didn't think how much my brother's choice would affect me.

Do I love Bongani? Yes, I do. These past few weeks I have imagined what our life would be like together.

The little kisses in the morning before we leave for our day, the random calls and messages during the day. Him randomly showing up on campus just so he can get his reply on a message I was too scared to reply to or maybe forgot to reply to it and then he would buy something I like and tell me how much he loves me and I feel so secure and protected.

Where I would cook for him something and he likes it even though he might not know it. Some of my traditional food too or bake for him one day while he plays his music and dances for me though he cannot dance very well. For me that is just something I want to experience with him for the rest of my life. The Purity that he has shown to me. Is that hard to ask? Does his age matter really? I don't think so, he makes me happy. That counts for something right?

A knock surfaces from the door and I ignore it.

“Nwabisa please can we talk”, It's my father.

I want to talk to him but I am scared that the part of the talk will leave an agreement with what Yonela has said.

I mean Yonela got married at 25 with his wife who was once ,19. Why can't I do the same?

“Nwabisa ntombami, ndicela sithethe (Nwabisa my child, please can we talk)”,He says.

I feel bad for him.

My phone rings and I sit up and pull it out my jeans and it's Bongani, I didn't tell him how I left and went and if I have arrived safely.

I turn it off and send a message stating that I am okay and I am home safe. I don't want to speak to him at the moment.

I stand up from the bed and I go and open the door for my dad and he smiles while looking at me before it fades.

“I am sorry”,he says and gives me a hug.

“You are the only girl we have here at home. Someone the boys want to protect and my only child that serves to be proof enough that I am fertile”,he says and I sniff.

“I am sorry Bhelekazi”,he says.

“Please talk to Yoni tata”,I say.

“Yonela did raise some points. We don't know this boy and his family or where they are from”,He says.

“His name is Bongani Ntuli, he is the second born of his mother and I think number 7 if not 6 from his father's children. He is from a big family and his mother is very lovely woman, he is lovely too”

“How many children does his father have?”

“29,he is married. It's a polygamy home”,I feel him stiffen.

“I don't want that for you”,He says.

“Bongani wouldn't so that to me Tata”

“How do you know Nwabisa?”

“He told me, he doesn't desire to have many women like his father because his heart can love one person”

“Which I assume is you”,I nod my head.

He sighs.

“I will think about this but you are still young to be a wife”

“I know but Yoni's wife is too and so did mom when you married her”,I say and he chuckles.

“Thats different. Different times”

“But Yoni has been married 7 years only”,I say.

“I know. Come and eat”

“Okay, I will come when I have washed my face.”,I say.

“Okay”,he kisses my cheek and let's me go to wash my face.

.

I have settled. More or less I should say that my welcome wasn't as welcoming. Yoni and his family are here, I don't know if it is to keep an eye on me or they are here for holidays but either way he is off from his work. He works ins Queens town so they live near there with his family.

I love my family but at times they get on my nerves. I decided to call my so called boyfriend since I have been avoiding him last night before I have to wake up.

The phone rings a few times before it gets answered.

“Sthandwa Sami, sesixabene yini?(Are we fighting?)’?”,he says.

I smile a bit.

“No, I was still trying to settle in”

“I missed talking to you and it seems like the Eastern Cape has swallowed my wife”,I find myself blushing.

“The drama baby”

“I am being serious”

“Well my brother is not happy about the letter” I sigh.

“Which one?”, I did explain to him I have brothers.

“The older one”, I sigh once again.

“What did your father say?”

“I don't know where I stand with him but he is not as mad as that one is, he is trying to reason I think he is scared but also not trying to show it”

“You are his only daughter”, He says.

“Yes I know, but I am meant to grow up right?”, I ask.

“Ukuba ngikumithisile ngabe kungcono (If I had impregnated you then it would've been better)”, he says.

“Baby are you hearing yourself?”, Being pregnant is the better solution here? This man must have smoked something to say that.

“Yes, I am hearing myself”

“Ayi baby, still they would be mad and raise the baby in their own ”

“Dont worry, that could be our plan B”

“I am not sleeping with you if that's the case. I don't want to be pregnant now”, I say and he laughs.

Oh he finds this amusing, my fear of having a baby at this age is amusing.

“Okay so what is plan B then? We can run away”, He says.

“Baby, don't overthink this. You have a wild imagination”

“I just want us together”, He says and I bite my bottom lip.

“Me too”, I want that. I want us together.

CHAPTER 38

IMINATHI

Yonela is not talking to me, quiet frankly I am the one who is not talking to him, I mean why would I when a man who has what he wants wants to hinder us all from getting a taste of what he has. He hasn't told me concrete reasons of why I shouldn't at least be engaged to Bongani for that particular reason. Maybe if it was a Xhosa or Baca or Pondo guy he would've been very happy and probably offer half the payment himself.

I don't know but he is the most rooted and traditional one in the family. You would swear he is my father's age too for that matter.

I wish my grandmother could come back from her trip and sort out her grandson because I cannot take this from him anymore. I have waken up and I am outside near the kraal. My father's livestock is slowly decreasing. He sold some of his animals recently when I had to get things to prepare me for university and also some cows left this yard when Yonela decided to get married and I don't know if the time comes when Kamva takes someone will be have cattle to spare for him but I know my father he will have something for him.

I throw the crumbs and the chickens are plucking on the floor away as I watch them. I just woke up and washed my face before I dressed up in my dress and my old gum boots. They are pink and my father bought them for me 4 years ago, when the colour pink used to be my favourite.

I smile a little as I feed these little creatures.

“Molo Sisi, namhlanje wavuka early(Today you woke up early)”,It's Sis Balwa, Yoni's wife.

“I just couldn't sleep”,I say and she breathed in and out.

“I don't know if I am overstepping but I heard that you are getting married”,She says.

I keep quiet.

“Are you not happy?”,She asks and comes closer.

“Your husband doesn't want me to.”,I say and stop what I am doing just remembering him tearing that letter up in front of me.

“I am sorry”,she says.

It's unfair honestly but I don't say it. She is 26 years old and she has been married to that man for 7 years now. Why can't I ? I mean I am older in age in terms of getting married between the both of us but this is Yonela I am talking about. Hard headed.

“What is tata saying about this?”

“He is unsure”

“Oh, food is going to be ready soon”, I nod my head and she leaves.

I carry on with what I am doing. When I am done I turn around and make my way to the house and I rub my boots on the carpet near the kitchen door and get inside. Kamva is up and he smiles when he sees me.

“Molo Nwabisa”

“Molo bhuti”, I say.

“I am going to town to run errands. Do you want to come?”, he asks and as I was about to say yes Yoni walks in.

“She is staying here, we don't want her going to boys”, He says.

“Whats your problem with me bhuti?”, I am starting to get irritated.

“My problem with you how?”

“You don't want me to do anything and worse since someone asked to make me their wife”

“I don't want you being someone's wife especially in KZN ”

“Why? ”

“You have to keep a clear root for your children and not confuse them. You are a Xhosa woman which should go accordingly”

“No Yonela that is not how life works. You married Lubabalwa because you love her. Let Iminathi do the same”, Kamva intervenes.

“Kamva don't intervene in this, elders should take care of it”

“Exactly, you are like us bhuti. The elders are uMakhulu and Tata here. While they are still alive they can make that decision”, He clenches his jaw.

He is angry.

“Uthetha nami olohlobo Nwabisa?!(You are talking to me like that Nwabisa)”, He says.

“Calm down Yonela”

“Akho mbeko kulomntana!(There is no respect in this child!)”, He says.

“What is going on with the shouting?”, My father asks.

“Ask your daughter who is disrespecting us for this Zulu boyfriend ”, I swallow.

I respect my father but for Yoni to say that really just pissed me off. Bongani is more than just being a Zulu man, he is my man. Atleast say that.

“Nwabisa?”

“Tata”, I turn to my dad leaving Yonela who is breathing fire.

“Kuqhubeka ntoni ngawe mntanami(what is going on with you my child?)”, He asks.

“Tata, I... Yonela is being a bit hard on me. Yes I found love early but Tata shouldn't I get a fair shot like him and Balwa? He married her at 19 why can't I get married at 21?”, I say.

“Dont compare me and My wife in this”, Yonela goes off.

“What difference does it make?”

“You see what I mean? No respect”, Yonela says.

If he could he would hit me right now.

“Come Nwabisa”, My dad says.

“Tata I...”, Yonela tries to speak but my dad lifts his hand.

“I will speak with her”, He says and then he sighs before I follow after my father.

We walk outside and then he places the shovel next to the house.

He then goes to the tap and he washes his hands before he closes the tap and looks at me.

“Tell me why do you want this to happen so badly. You have been here only two days”, He says.

“I know that you don't want me leaving tata but at some point I will. I want to experience love too and this man is willing to make an honest woman out of me in that. I know I have to finish school and I am not neglecting you tata”, I say.

He sighs closing his eyes.

“You are still my baby”

“I know”, I say.

“Nwabisa. I don't know what to say”, He says and I look down.

“You don't speak to your brothers in that manner. We have spoken about this before”, He says and I nod.

“Ewe tata, uxolo(Yes dad,sorry)”, He nods.

“Go and bath so we can eat then Kamva will take you with to town .

“Okay”, He didn't respond to me giving me atleast a clear indication of what is going on honestly.

I walk away.

DUDU

I have been here in the city for just a short while but so far I am adjusting to this place. Mbheki has been going around through the city to find a job and yesterday it seemed promising and for me? Well I tried to get one and I did at a Chinese shop in town but to Mbheki's friend's judgement of them overworking you and you get little pay Mbheki didn't like that so I was told to wait until Mbheki gets a job and then from there we will know what to do.

I am in the living room. I had just cleaned this house and cooked too. I am waiting for these men to come back. I wish to get a phone soon so that I can be able to contact my sister and ask her how things are going.

The door opens as I am watching the news and then Mbheki walks in the house and he smiles looking at me.

“Hello”, I say.

“Hi”

“You seem hopeful”, I say.

“I got a job, I think”

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He says and I look at him and smile.

“Oh my God, where?!”, I say.

“At the taxi rank”,He says and I look at him.

“As the driver? You can't drive yet”,I say.

“No, I will be helping with the load and counting money”,He says and I breathe out.

“Okay, are you sure?”

”Yes, I am happy. Things are going to be okay for us”,He says.

“I will look for another job”,I say.

“Or we can soon start with little courses you can do just to keep you busy”,He says.

“Isnt that going to cost money?”,I ask.

“I do not mind Dudu, it's investing in you”,He says and I nod my head.

“Thank you so much”,He nods his head.

“I cooked. Do you want me to dish up for you?”,I ask.

“I am full for now. My new boss got me something to eat”

“Thats nice of him”,I say.

“It is”

We sit next to each other and I rest my head on his shoulder as we watch TV.

I don't know but I think I love Mbheki but I know that we are just friends.

IMINATHI

It has been only two days and already this man has drove kilometers just to be here but I am happy to see him. We just came back from town with Kamva and in a distance we saw Bongani's car. I told him and he told me he will cover for me while I go to my boyfriend. That is why I love Kamva so much. I love Yonela too but at times we butt heads.

I got out of the car and ran to this man's car and he got out and I got in his arms and he kisses my neck.

“God knows how much I have missed you”,He says and I feel the same.

“Me too baby, you know you shouldn't be here”

“I know but I couldn't help stress over you”,He says.

This is sweet. We break the hug.

Kamva drives past and stops the truck.

“Bhudda”,He says.

“Bafo”,Bongani says and Kamva looks at me.

“You will find me by the gate. umntana wasekhaya, andifuni ngaye (This is my sister, I don't want anything happening with her)”

“Nothing will happen to her”,Kamva nods before he drives off a bit.

I quickly give Bongani a kiss and he is a bit surprised but he returns it. His fingers intertwine around my waist and he holds me closer to him. I break the kiss and look at him then trail my fingers over his chest.

“Ngiyakuthanda mama”

“Uthandwa ndim Sithandwa sami”

“I know this may look otherwise but I promise you. We will be together”

“And we will be, that I know”,I say and he smiles biting his bottom lip.

“Umuhle”,He says removing my braids and playing with them and I smile.

“Enkosi(Thank you)”,I say shying away.

We stay there for a little while before we disappear in his car.

BUSISILE.

Pregnancy, the worst thing that has become my enemy. Here I am in bed because I am sick while I am pregnant and my lazy bum couldn't bring itself to get out of this room. All thanks to this man that I love and his lovely family.

Mabutho rushed out of the house to go to the pharmacy to get something that I can consume for the cold. MaThabethe has left already, yes she went back to the Ntuli yards and much to her dismay but she mentioned that a promise is a promise.

I haven't seen Zama since we left the Ntuli yards and Mabutho has been checking up on her. I know I will not see her until she is a bit grown to move around a lot but for now I could only see her through pictures and videos in Mabutho's phone.

The door opens and this man walks in and he has some take away and also another brown paper bag.

“Baby I got you some food and also medication. The pharmacist was really helpful”, I sat up and stretched for the food.

“Thank you Sothole”, He smiles.

“You know I like that, when you call me like that”

“Its part of your surname”

“Yes I know but your soft voice makes it sound good”, He says and I giggle and he kisses my nose.

“Baby”

“Mmmh?”

“I will be going with Nkanyezi this weekend on a work trip. I am trying too....”

“Its okay, I understand ”,I say.

“I hate leaving you alone”,He says getting on the bed sitting next to me while I take my food that is still warm and I eat.

“I will be with aunty here. I will be fine”,I say.

“I promise when we get married, I will give you the biggest wedding ever”,He says and I giggle.

“I would love that”,He perks my lips.

“I love you”

“I love you more”,He takes a chip from my food and we decide to share.

After eating I got full and he helped me take my medication.

He then made sure that I was warm enough and even opened the heater for me and I thank him.

He slipped in bed next to me and pulled me close to him.

“I miss my brother”,I say and he looks at me.

“You miss him?”

“Yes, I wonder where he is in the world”,I say.

“Maybe he is not that far”,I nod my head.

“Yes, maybe”,I didn't realise how much some part of me misses home. I wish I could visit but I know that I would be turned around as quickly as possible.

Chapter 39

BUSISILE

The day for Mabutho to leave has come. I am quiet saddened that I will not be with him for just some time. I know I can get through just a few days without him but I am so used to being next to him that it will be some adjustment for this weekend that I would have to make but I understand where he is coming from and this is work related. It is important that he must go.

We are standing outside the car and he has his hands around my waist staring at my saddened face.

He has been telling me that he will call and the weekend will be over in just a quick bit and I know that but calling and presence are not the same thing.

“I wish I could take you with me”, he says.

Me too, but a pregnant woman is not supposed to travel much. Well in this family, they are just paranoid should I say.

“Take care of yourself. I love you”, I say.

I must mask the sadness just so that he can leave and doesn't stand here any longer delaying his friend.

“I love you more Sithandwa sami”, He perks my lips and pulls me in for a hug that is fully interrupted by the swollen belly that is in the way.

I wish I could put it aside so that I can just get a proper hug.

He kisses my neck before he breaks the hug and he gets inside the car while I step away.

I watch as its engine roar and before I knew it, he drives out of the yard leaving the electrical gate closing on its own.

I turn away once the car is gone and I get inside the house.

MaThabethe's sister went out to get something from the shops so it's just me, myself and I.

I even miss Monde's company so as MaThabethe's company. Yes she does call very frequently to check how we are doing at the moment and if we are still okay and do not need anything. I am sure that things have gone back to normal in the Ntuli yards ever since the ceremony and I could only think of that.

I get to the living room and switch on the TV.

I haven't watched it since yesterday, I was helping Mabutho pack some things and things that are of importance.

My phone pings and I take it and it's a message from him.

‘I miss you already’, it says.

It's from Mabutho and I am wondering why is he texting while driving.

'I miss you too, be safe', I send and then grab the remote and flip through the channels to find something that I might like to watch.

IMINATHI

The week is about to end and in just two days I am supposed to go back to res and settle in for the continuation of the semester.

The supposed lobola negotiations are supposed to be tomorrow and things have been silent here at home. I am tired of begging them, quiet frankly they shouldn't be surprised one day when I rock up married to the love of my life with children just to force them to take the lobola's this time. I don't really know why they are doing this at this point. I feel like they are also not communicating sufficient things to me the way that they should be in order for me to atleast understand what is going on.

I am seated just outside the kitchen in the sun. The house feels a bit cold mainly because it's a bit wide and also Yonela's cold energy. I do not know why he has not gone back to his house, he is not really needed here and he has been tormenting my holidays as it is.

“Can I join you Sisi?”, I look up and is his wife.

I nod. I won't find peace actually.

Maybe Yonela has sent his wife to fish some news from me that they can gossip about. Well a few days ago I told this woman in confidence of why I would want to be with Bongani. This one took what we have discussed to her husband who confronted me about it making it a bit of a mess. He is angry at me and I am too but more especially I am disappointed in my father for not talking to me. I wish my grandmother was here to hold her kids on a leash. Atleast that would've comforted me in my stay here.

“I am sorry sisi”, Balwa says.

It's already done. I know she will do it again, she is loyal to her husband of which is understandable. I would be too loyal to Bongani if I was married to him in his family but she didn't have to be a mail woman and take what I said to her in confidence to her man and have me ambushed in that manner.

“Its fine”, I don't want to talk about it.

Kamva has been the sweetest so far. As always , he comforted me and made me feel free and express myself in the way I wanted to without feeling I am being fought against or whatever the case may be. That is why he is my favourite brother to be quiet honest and I am not afraid of saying it.

“Yonela loves you so much Nwabisa”,She says.

Scoff! She is trying to make me see reason in her husband's childish ways.

“Balwa I am not going to speak about Yonela. I don't want my day ruined”,I say and she is quiet.

We sit in silence for a moment.

My father was in the kraal since morning and he has been busy with his cattle. Yonela ? I don't know where he is and I really do not care at the moment. Kamva went out on an errand and I declined to even leave before I get another earful from his beloved.

“You know marriage is not easy”,Bales speaks.

I sigh, I really do not want to talk to her at the moment.

“What is easy?”

“Being in love is exciting but also precautions need to be taken”

“You and Yonela didn't think of that when you guys got married”,I say.

Yes I am throwing a jab so that she can take it on her husband's behalf. Isn't it she is his spy and spokesman too!

“I am sorry”,She says.

I am not about to apologise. I am too worked up to do so.

I stand up from where I am leaving her there and I see the bakkie making its way back in. Great! Kamva is back and things will be a bit better for me today. I make my way to the car as it has come to a halt and he hops out and my uncle comes out of the car too.

“Nwabisa!”, I rush up to him and I see my grandmother too.

I have never felt happy, I feel like I have been released from the shackles of being abused and rush up to them.

I am happy to see them, I am grabbing my grandmother's waist like my life depends on it and I start sobbing.

“Makhulu, uYonela has been abusing me these past few days and I am not happy. Utata is not helping”, Yes I am selling them out.

My grandmother can put Yonela in his place and I know she will chase him away to go back to his house and make the rules there, not here.

My father has a very soft spot for his late sister's kids so that is why tag teaming with Yonela is so easy for him.

“Shhh I am here now, I will sort it out”, She says.

“We heard you want to get married”, My uncle says.

I don't know how to answer it but I nod in honesty.

“Shhh, don't cry my child. I am here now”, My grandmother says.

I am happy.

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We are in the living room

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silence has befallen the room after my grandmother has told Yonela off when he tried to bring his useless points across. My father has been silent and quiet frankly he has no say when his mother has spoken. My uncle is silent too, I am happy because the might has been humbled.

“I leave for a few days and already things are upside down!”, My grandmother repeats again.

She has a thing for repeating what she has said before again as a way for us to hear what she is saying.

I look at Yonela who has his head bowed down. He has been told the your house your rules lecture and his wife is nowhere near uttering a thing.

I look at Kamva and I am thankful that he had to fetch my grandmother. If it weren't for him calling her back then I

would've probably killed Yonela by now if he said anything else to me.

“Tomorrow that boy's family is coming. You will not give them a hard time as other families didn't with you!” ,My grandmother is stern.

I am happy, everyone has gotten the memo.

Yonela shoots his eyes to my grandmother and he wants to protest but he knows better than to say anything because he would be sent packing this instant and that 2 daystah extension will be terminated .

“Nwabisa go and make some tea for me” ,Gladly.

I stand up and rush to the kitchen. I quickly send a text to Bongani telling him to not change his plans and he should be on his way here in KZN.

I fill the kettle with water and get onto making tea.

Yonela walks in the kitchen and he looks at me.

“Are you happy?”

“Yes, very much!” ,it rubs him the wrong way and quiet frankly I don't care.

Kamva follows and he smiles when he enters.

“Do you need any help?” ,He asks.

“No, I got it. Thank you”, I thank him for what he has done for me.

“I want you to be happy ”, Argh he deserves a big reward for his efforts.

DUDU

I am nervous, it's Mbheki's work day today and I am just wondering how things are going to go for him honestly. He is supposed to come back a bit late today so his friend will be back earlier than he will be. I am in the kitchen just doing the finishing touches on the meals when I hear a hoot from outside and I make my way outside and I see a taxi parked by the gate. Mbheki Hoos out of the passenger side and he opens the gate before the taxi drives in. He comes towards me and he smiles.

“Hey, you are back early?” , I say.

“Yes, I want you to meet my boss. Well he wants to see where I live” , He says and it is weird for that.

“Why?”

“I don't know” , I take a deep breath in as the man hops out of the taxi.

He seems a bit old and as should be I presume. He makes his way towards us after closing the taxi and locking it and Mbheki places his hand on my waist.

I feel my heart skip a beat and it pulsates in that moment.

The man has a serious face that one cannot read off.

“Ntokazi”, he says.

“Baba”, I just say and look away from him.

“Mnumzane, this is Dudu. We live together with a friend”

“She is with your friend?”, The old man asks.

“No she is with me”, I look at Mbheki as he mentions but I keep my silence.

“It is nice to meet you Nkosazane.”

“We should go inside”, we move inside the house.

The man looks around the house and he settles on the couch.

I am now released to the kitchen. I prepare something to drink and take it to them, they are speaking and seems like this man is doing most of the talking. His eyes light up as he speaks with Mbheki and I am wondering what kind of a boss is this.

I stay in the kitchen to finish my pots and soon Mbheki walks in the kitchen.

“Come, Babu Sibisi wants to talk to us”, Sibisi? That's his surname? Okay.

W walk to the living room and we settle on the couch. The TV is switched off and there is silence.

“my daughter and son, I know that what I am about to mention will be something that is out of character but I think it's best that I mention it here”,The man says.

We don't know him, infact all I know is that he is Mbheki's boss.

We nod in acknowledging him.

“I do not have children. I have never had children before and my wife became late years ago. I have always been alone after that with no one to leave my legacy for. When I saw you mfana you reminded me of my young self once and knowing you gave me a bit of hope and I want to take you in as my child if you allow me”,the man says.

I look at Mbheki.

“I appreciate that baba but what could be the reason?”,He asks.

“I want to leave my things to someone whom atleast hold my name and you do”,he says.

Sibisi? Yes that's why.

I have no doubt that this man is not Mbheki's father by any chance because Mbheki and Busisile look just like their father and bits of their father and this man looks like nothing to Mbheki and Busisile.

“Dont you have my family members?” ,I butt in and ask.

It could be a scam. I heard of those so who knows.

“I do have a brother somewhere in the world but he got married years ago and forgot about me” ,He says pained.

“I will think about it” ,Mbheki says.

The man nods.

The juice has not been touched. He stands up and we do the same.

“I will see you tomorrow” ,the man says and Mbheki escorts him outside. I stay in the house waiting for him to come back.

CHAPTER 40

BUSISILE

It's Saturday, Mabutho is not here and we just called each other this morning. He told me that Bongani is going to the Eastern Cape with some of their brother's and the father will stay behind as he is old for long distance as of yet to pay for Iminathi's lobola. That is quick and I would t blame him as Iminathi is a catch that one wouldn't want to let go. Yes I haven't known her for that long but I know that she is a good woman and I know that Bongani knows what is right for him.

Here I am parading the stores of this mall. MaThabethe has driven coming down to Durban just to keep my company and see me. Yes she came with a new ride and it seems like Mphemba is the one who paid for it. The woman is living larger than she has ever lived and she all testifies that it is working well for her.

I am alone in the house while the aunt has went out to get some errands done for the day. I don't mind staying alone honestly but the house is really quiet and I just miss having Mabutho around at times or even his mother too.

I am just watching some TV when my phone rings and it's this man whom I share my love with. I find myself smiling that very moment before I even answer his call.

“MaSibisi”

“Sothole, how are you?”

“I miss you, that's how I am”

“Me too, how is everything going that side?” ,I ask.

“Everything is going good baby. Work is going in the direction I am hoping for”

“That is great. I hope that it gets better”

“It will Sthandwa sami. I have been thinking, you need to get on WhatsApp soon so we can video call each other” ,He says.

“Okay, I will learn it some time”

“I will teach you” , we chat some more and before we know it the call ends and I am back to watching some TV in front of me. After the little series is done I get up from the couch and rush to the bathroom to pee. I can't wait for my child to come and have someone I can sit with all day but I hope that one day I will be able to go to school and Mabutho has garenteed that happening for me.

DUDU

Meeting Mbheki's boss has been something that has been on my mind the whole time since we have met him. I am actually thinking how this man wants to take Mbheki under his wing and possibly leave everything for him when he hardly knows him and we also do not know him as well. I am worried and Mbheki is a bit too but I can see that he doesn't really believe that a man could be this generous. It's too suspicious to me.

It's almost lunch time and I know that Mbheki is on his way back as he mentioned that he might pop in during lunch. I just turn off the stove from cooking, this will be our lunch and supper too and that is all I do during the day, I cook and clean. I could be working right now if Mbheki and his friend didn't tell me not to take the job at the China store that I got. The front door opens I move from the kitchen and Mbheki walks in and I look at him.

“Hi”, I say.

“Hi, I have a few things outside.”, He says and two men follow him inside with a few plastic bags.

It's groceries and I look at him.

“Where did you get this from?”

“My boss”, He says with a smile and I frown a bit.

The men go outside and come back inside with the groceries and I look at the things on the floor.

“Mbheki”, He looks at me.

“Yes?”

“What does this man want from you?”, I ask.

“I think he likes me as a son since we also share the same surname and he doesn't have any other family members”, I frown.

“I understand but don't you think he is doing a but too much? I am not being ungrateful but this is the city and people are dangerous”, I say and he comes closer to him.

“Do not worry Dudu, nothing will happen to us okay? I will make sure of that”, He says and gives me a little perk on my lips before walking out.

I am left there dumb founded and I touch my lips. Did he just kiss me? I move from the living room and rush to the room I use and look at myself through the little mirror. He just gave me a kiss, what does it mean?

It means nothing Dudu. My other thoughts say and I sigh closing my eyes.

“Dudu!”, I hear Mbheki call me and I go to the living room and I find him there opening a few plastics from Edgars and Mr Price. He takes out a dress and holds it up.

“What do you think?”

“Its beautiful Mbheki”, I gasp going closer to it.

“I bought it for you”, He says and I look at him.

“Are you sure?”

“Yes”

I hold it against my body and twirl around.

“Its beautiful”

“You are beautiful”, I find myself blushing.

He is making me feel a bit shy at the moment.

IMINATHI

It's the negotiations day and the last time I spoke to Bongani was just 2 hours ago when he told me how far they are with the distance. I did send the location but I can't help think of the worst just as he is silent and I can't reach him anymore. A lot is going through my mind at the moment. Could it be that they are lost or maybe they got injured on their way here? A lot is going through my mind at the moment.

Balwa is with me in my room as I am placing up and down trying Bongani again for the 5th time and when the white woman announces that the number is not available at the moment I feel it sink to my stomach.

“Maybe where they are there is no signal”, Balwa says.

I am sure Yonela is happy with the delay that is happening. If it was up to him they would get lost forever.

My grandmother is trying to oversee if everything is going good and that no one messes up anything for me.

I try Bongani again and this time it rings than to send me straight to voicemail. That gives me hope and before I know it the call is answered.

“Sthandwa Sami”

“Bongani nikuphi?”,I ask.

“We are in front of your home”

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I rush to the window and peak outside and that's where I see men in front of the gate shouting.

Parts of me ease as I let a breath out.

“You scared me, I thought you have closed your phone and ran off”,he laughs.

“Why would I do that baby?”

“I don't know what goes on in your mind”,I say.

“I wouldn't. I want you”,I find myself smiling.

Balwa is also smiling even though she doesn't know why.

I peak through the window again.

“Where are you? I can't see you”

“You are not supposed to see me”,he says.

“Not even a sneak peak?”

“Stay wherever you are Iminathi. I don't want trouble and you will see me alot after this”,He says and I groan.

“Fine”

“I love you Mama”,I smile.

This Zulu man of mine.

“I love you too baby”,We speak some more before we hang up on each other.

I join Balwa on the bed and she looks at me.

“You love this man”,She says.

“Yes I do”,I can't even hide it anymore.

I hope that Yonela is not ruining anything for me.

DUDU

After the things were left in the house Mbheki left to go and see his new boss and I can't help but have that man give me unease vibes at times. I am worried about Mbheki, even though he says that I shouldn't worry but I could not help but worry. I

know if Busisile was here she would say the same thing as I am saying. It has been almost an hour since he left and he also bought a phone for me. I am just scared that what if this man makes us pay for all of this in some way. Yes Mbheki as a beautiful soft heart just like Busisile but I am scared for him and he thinks everyone is kind like them well not everyone is nice like them.

I wish his friend could maybe help him open his eyes that this is the city and people here can be ruthless.

I sit in front of the TV and watch it, well it's watching me as I am consumed in thoughts. Some of those thoughts involve the little kiss that Mbheki gave to me earlier on and I still cannot stop thinking about it. The door opens and I turn to it and he walks in and his boss follows him. I stand up from the couch as they walk inside.

“Sawubona ndodakazi”, The man says.

“Baba”, I don't know how to address him.

“Babu Sibisi wants to talk to you Dudu”, Mbheki says.

I swallow.

“About?”, I ask.

“He will tell you”, Mbheki says.

“Baba would you like anything to drink?”, he asks.

“Water”, Babu Sibisi says and Mbheki disappears. I am left with this man.

“I like you for the young man”, he says and I keep my silence.

“I know you are concerned about Mbheki and me being this nice”, Yes I am concerned!

“Why are you nice?”, I ask.

“Beacuse I need you guys to look after my assets when I am gone”, he says.

“Why don't you find your family? You have money”, I say.

“I know but this feels right”, I am still not convinced.

“Please take care of this man. My lawyer will contact both of you soon”

I don't know what to say.

In my head this is just screaming Scam!

Mbheki appears and he comes with the water and gives it to her boss.

“Keep her close, she is a gem”, the man says.

“I intend on doing that”, Mbheki says with a smile.

This man gives me a bit of unease.

CHAPTER 41

DUDU

I am worried about Mbheki and his sudden trust on this man that we hardly know in our lives. I just know that sometimes people can't be this kind for nothing but I am trying to trust that Mbheki knows what is happening and is very alert too.

He comes back inside the house after accompanying his boss and I am cleaning out the things from the living room and he stops in front of me before I look up to him.

“I see that you are worried”, I am. why shouldn't I be?

“This man, how much do you trust him?”

“I don't know Dudu”

I nod my head while biting my bottom lip.

“Just be careful okay?”, He nods his head.

“I will be, I promise you”, I sigh while closing my eyes and then I nod.

“Let me go and wash these”

“Okay”, I walk away from him and go to the kitchen.

I place everything in the little sink and I breathe in and out.

I pray that God looks out for us in this situation. I don't want to find us in a place where we have to pay with our lives for all of this that is suddenly being handed out to us.

One thing about Mbheki is that he sees the good in other people and that worries me.

Yes give someone the benefit of a doubt but also do not be too trusting and I wish that he wasn't this trusting at all.

IMINATHI

The negotiations are giving me some sort of anxiety and I am not at rest at the moment. It has been over a little as 2 hours and my grandmother has been coming in and out of my room to check if I am fine and all I would ask is if things are okay and she would assure me that they are but I don't trust Yonela or my dad at the moment.

I have paced up and down the room, called this man until I ran out of airtime and now all I am left to do it is to just sit and relax and just wait for the end results.

“Everything will be okay”, Balwa says.

Easy for her to say, she is married to her love.

“I don't know, they have been in there for far too long”

“These things take time Nwabisa”

Well they are rubbing me off the wrong way.

My phone rings and I quickly take it and it's this man who should be a few steps closer to being my husband.

Husband? Mmmh something that sounds so good to say yet so strange.

“Sthandwa sami”, I sigh.

“I am worried”, I quickly say.

“I am not supposed to tell you this but my brother just sent a message and he says everything has gone well, they are just finishing up”, I breathe out.

“I hope you are not joking”

“How can I play with something so sensitive?”, I am just stressed.

“Its just, I am stressed”

“Don't be”

“You don't know how my family behaves so I am far from relaxing until they tell me”, he chuckles.

“Okay but know that you are mine now and I am not letting you go”, I smile.

There is a light knock on my door.

“Baby I have to go”

“Okay”, my grandmother enters the room followed by my father.

“Nwabisa, everything went well mntanami”, I couldn't believe it.

“Are you serious Makhulu?”, I rush to her and hug her.

“Enkosi kakhulu”

“Oh my child”, She rubs my back.

I turn and hug my dad as well. He receives me by holds me for a little while longer.

“I am going to miss having you here every time”

“I will visit alot. I promise tata”

“I am scared that you have grown up.”

I don't say anything, instead I indulge being in his arms for that long.

BUSISILE.

Couches can be uncomfortable at times even when you take the most shortest nap you can find but they are uncomfortable at times. I fell asleep while I was watching TV and it's the most common thing to happen in my life these days and that is falling asleep too much. I grab my phone under my back and also the

remote that has treated me so harshly since I closed my eyes and I place them on the coffee table.

I stretch before I get off the couch and waddle my way to the kitchen.

My stomach is complaining and I am hungry too

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too much. I open the fridge and get something to eat and also take out some ingredients so that I can cook. I don't know when Mabutho's aunt is going to be back. It's getting a bit late now so I might as well cook something for the both of us.

I get my snacks and eat them while I am cooking. If I don't then I will find myself on the floor fainted from hunger.

The multitasking helps because I get to finish on time but I don't shy away from dishing up for myself and grabbing a plate. I place my hand on my stomach and rub it before I grab a utensil and make my way to the living room. I place my food down and I go and lock the doors. Mabutho's aunt's has her own set of keys so she will open with them once she comes back. I close the curtains and turn on the lights. I go upstairs and do the same before I come back down.

I find my phone ringing and I lunge to it. It's Mabutho.

I quickly answer it.

“Sthandwa sami”, he says.

“Mabutho”, I say.

“What did I do now for you to call me by my name?”, He asks.

“Nothing, you did nothing. I didn't know there was a problem when I called you by your name”

“You usually call me by my clan name these days.”, I giggle at him sulking.

“You said I am making you sound older”

“If you say Mphemba yes but I like having my own clan name to use”, I laugh.

“You are so dramatic”

“I am dramatic, have you met my mother?”, I am now laughing too much.

“Oh, I will tell MaThabethe that you said that about her”

“Ah I forgot she is your best friend phela. Ngeke sisahleba ngaye(We won't gossip about her)”, I carry on laughing.

“Stop, you will kill me and the baby”

“I don't want that. ”

I try to calm down from the laughing and I eventually do.

“What are you doing there?”

“I am about to eat. I am all alone”,I say.

“Yes, your aunt hasn't come back so I am still all alone”

“I will call her to check on her just now”

“Okay”

“Is our baby treating you well?”

“Yes, very much. Just like it's father”

“I am happy ufunzo seluvela early kanje”,I laugh.

This man is going to kill me.in laughter.

“Mabutho my stomach hurts from laughing”

“I am sorry Sthandwa sami, I will stop for the night but I will be back”,I laugh.

I hear him heave a sigh.

“I love you MaSibisi. Don't ever forget that”

“I love you too Sothole”,My heart warms up as he mentioned that.

I love him, so much and I don't regret loving him.

IMINATHI

I finally got to be in the presence of Bongani after not seeing him for the past week and trust me it has been a daunting week

at that. Now I am happy that things went well for the both of us and I am happy that I am returning to KZN with him, plus I couldn't stay because I am only left with one day before I go back to school.

He is holding my hand as we are seated in the back seat while his brother is the one driving.

I look at this man and he looks right back at me and I smile.

“Umoyizeliswa yini?”

“Mmmh?”

“Uyamoyizela”

“What is Moyizela?”

“Blushing, smiling”, we still have a long way to go.

Yes as much as we can understand each other but there are certain words where we don't buy with time we will understand each other I guess.

“Nothing”, I shake my head.

He soon wraps his arms around my waist and whispers into my ear.

“I love you”, He slightly kisses my neck.

I love him too, he knows I do.

CHAPTER 42

BUSISILE.

It has been quiet the two months and I am getting closer and closer to giving birth as I can possibly get. My feet get swollen to quickly, I get too tired too quickly and cranky and hungry too and Mabutho has to put up with all of that.

Today we are going to review that house that MaThabethe had gotten for us and I am quiet excited. Yes it's nice living with his aunt but some days I feel like if we lived alone like at the farm house those would be a but better. I don't know if I am making some sort of sense or not.

The drive is yet a bit lengthy one but not for much longer. We are getting to the other beautiful parts of this city and I am here for it.

“Have you spoken to your father?” ,I find myself asking Mabutho that as he is driving.

He quickly takes a glimpse off me and then he keeps quiet for a moment before he answers.

“Yes, last week” ,That's progress I guess.

“What if he wants you back at the farm?”

“I will not go back Mabusi”

He means it but I do get why he will not go back. Having something on his own without his family and siblings being involved is an achievement to him even though he had to restart everything. I look at him for a moment before I find myself saying.

“I am proud of how far you have come”,I just let him know.

He turns to look at me and then he smiles before he takes my hand and kisses it.

“It makes me happy to hear that”

“I mean it Mabutho”,he looks at me.

“You mean alot to me Busisile”,I smile and giggle.

“I even forgot for a moment that Mabusi is not my real name”,He chuckles as he focuses on the road.

“You are full of jokes you know that?”,I shake my head with a smile.

We keep each other occupied with the talking and then we get to the place and I see a beautiful gate open and Mabutho drives in.

“Wow”,the green grass, the structure and beauty of the house has got me mesmerized at the sight.

“Its beautiful?”

“Yes, very much”,I say.

There is a car parked just along this driveway.

Mabutho hops out and he comes to my side and he helps me out of the car and I thank him. A lady hops out of the car and she smiles, she is beautiful and so petite. I have never seen someone who is almost my old size so beautiful.

“Hello, I am Amanda”,She says.

“Mabutho and Busisile Ntuli ”

“Mrs Ntuli did mention. I am just here to show you the house and give the keys to you”,she says.

“We will stay here?”,I ask.

“Yes”,I look at Mabutho and he lightly smiles.

“Let's go inside and see the place first”,he says and I nod my head. We make our way inside the house.

MABUTHO.

I am a bit uncomfortable with the set up, the house I want Busisile and our child and I to share is a house that I accumulated through all my hard work but I do understand that my mother is trying to look out for us and is being generous to us as well. Seeing Busisile's eyes glisten at the sight of each

room and the little smile that appears on her lips just reminds me of how much I love this woman and I am glad that I didn't let her go too.

The lady who is taking us around the house is the one talking with Mabusi while I just keep my silence and stare. I am now convinced that the answer from Mabusi after this is that she likes the place and I wouldn't have a choice but to accept this 'Gift' from my mother.

The fact that my mother pawned my father for it just rubs me off the wrong way but then again. I get where she is coming from.

"Oh my!Sithole look at this big kitchen and living room",Busisile says.

She has hands over her mouth.

The modern look is getting to her so much.

"Is the house child friendly? I have a daughter and another baby on the way.",I ask.

"Yes, very but you can baby proof the corners once the one who is yet to come starts moving around. Congratulations by the way",She says. I just nod.

"I love this place, it's so beautiful",Busisile says.

I knew that she would love everything about this place.

We are escorted to see the ocean view and it is beautiful, I stand behind Mabusi and place my hands around her waist.

“This is beautiful”, I say .

“So much”, The smile on her face just melts me so much.

MANDISA

Motherhood? That's something that has shown me that it is not easy to juggle around. I don't know sometimes what to do when the baby cries non stop or they don't want to rest either. I just feel like I am failing at times. Yes I have a nanny that helps me, the grandparents saw it fit to have someone who can atleast assist me whenever I need her and need help with the baby.

Me and Mabutho? It had ended. I am now convinced that he didn't love me enough, enough to be with me for the rest of our lives.

He loves his daughter though and he never fails to show up and be there for her. I am grateful that he is being a great dad for his daughter.

I don't know if I can trust him to let my daughter visit when the time comes. Not because of him but his new found girlfriend. If she can do something like jumping from father to son then my child is nothing. I do not trust her one bit.

I am in the shower and I had just woken up. I do have rough nights at times but I am more concerned about getting back into my shape and also getting out there once again. One child with no relationship can't hold me down now can it?

DUDU

I watch as this fancy car makes its way through the gate and swallow as I look at it but you cannot miss the happiness in his voice as he shouted over to me.

“Look what I have!”, He says pointing at this beautiful fancy car. He just got his licence and already he has a car now.

“Where? When did you get to buy it Mbheki?”

“You know Babu’ Sibisi”, I am still unsettled about that man but I don't want to hinder Mbheki from getting his blessings, if these are his blessings.

Am I wrong to be concerned for him? I really am and what scares me the most is the fact that he will start seeing other city girls and forget about me.

He hops out of the car once it's on a stop and he comes towards me and picks me up before he gives me a cheek kiss.

I don't take it to heart or think about it much but it has been a regular thing. The lip perks, forehead perks and cheek kisses.

He never said anything and I have never said anything too.

“This man loves you”, I say.

“He does

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it's shocking how much he is changing our lives”, He says and I smile.

“What did you do today?”, He asks as he looks at me.

Still my feet are dangling in the air as I am locked in his arms.

“The usual”, We still live with his friend and his friend says he should take advantage of the benefits he receives from Mr Sibisi. He is even teaching him the ropes of the taxi business.

“Mbheki”, I say to him.

“I know you are concerned Dudu”

“I am but I am not going to say that I just have been thinking...”

“What is it?”, his eyes rest on mine for a moment and I look away from his gaze.

“Please look at me”, He says.

I look back at him.

“I...I...”, He says and stops before he takes a deep breath in.

“You?”

“I don't know how to tell you this”,My stomach turns.

“Yo...you don't have to be scared”,My heart is beating very fast.

“Thank you for being here with me, for leaving with me”,he says.

I lightly smile.

“Thank you for taking me. Is that all?”

“Ye...yes”,he says.

“Okay, I think this man might be related to you somehow just I don't know how and I...”,his lips rest on mine and I am shook as they rest longer than usual. He sucks on my lower lips and I let him be.

I find my self closing my eyes as he kisses me. He doesn't let me go but his grip tightens so that I do not fall. He breaks the kiss and I open my eyes and we gaze on each other.

“I am sorry to say this but I love you Dudu,I really do”,My heart races.

I never expected him to say this.

“I...I don't work or look like girls from here and...”,he interrupts me.

“I don't want you to be the same as the girls around here. I will take care of you, I love you for how you are and there is no one like you.”, He says.

I don't know what to say.

“Please...please put me down a bit”, I say and I could see some disappointment on his face. He nods his head and puts me down.

BUSISILE.

Mabutho was really quiet through the house tour until we got the set of keys and I just couldn't get enough of this place. He did ask me that do I like it before we were even handed the keys and I said yes. I could not lie, I have never seen such beauty before.

I am in the car now waiting for him to finish his call outside.

My phone rings and I quickly take it and it is MaThabethe. I smile before I even attempt to answer the call.

“Hello”

“Busisile, how are you?”

“I am fine ma, how are you?”

“I am okay, so how is the house?”

“Its beautiful ma, I have never seen something like that”

“I have taste. Phela I am not from here. I know stuff”,I giggle.

“Does baba know?”

“No, even if he does. He won't do anything about it”,I nod my head.

“I hear you mah. I think Mabutho is not happy about the idea but he is just doing it to please me and you”,I say.

“As he should be doing. You know his pride and ego will not shelter you and as a mom I have to step up sometimes”

“I don't want him feeling somehow”

“He will get over it. You guys should focus on the baby and the furniture will arrive tomorrow okay?”,I nod my head.

“Siyabonga ma, kwande kuwe(Thank you ma,more blessings to you)”

“I receive my child. Thank you. Let me go”,She says.

“Okay, bye”

“Bye my child”

I hang up and then Mabutho soon finishes his call and he comes and hops in the car.

“Are you okay?”,I ask.

He nods his head and smiles.

“Yes, I can't wait to stay alone with you”, He says and I find myself smiling.

“Me too”

He starts the car before he drives off.

BUSISILE

I have heard stories about giving birth, the pain from the contractions is what has been emphasized more than anything, countless times as well. A part of me is nervous but another part of me is wondering when these contraction stories would occur to me as badly as described. I should be screaming my lungs out, promising to not love Mabutho anymore and hate him for the pain I am going through but that is not the case. Instead I am in this hospital gown seated on the hospital bed feeling light contractions but not enough to have me rolling over the floor. I expected drama and action. The whole hospital knowing that Busisile is giving birth for the first time in her life and she is bringing some life into this earth.

“Can I have some water?” ,I say.

Mabutho gets me a glass of water and I thank him giving him a smile.

His aunt is here and so as his mother, she didn't want to miss this moment for the world.

“Are you sure you are okay baby?” ,Mabutho is worried.

I guess maybe Mandisa went through the screaming and shouting.

“Its painful but not bad”,I say and drink some water again.

“Let me call the doctor”,He says before walking out of the room to call the poor doctor for the 3rd time.

He is worried, I am too but the doctor said that people experience different things so I will believe him.

I place the water on the side and then fold my arms.

The tingling sensation on my abdomen indicates what I am going through.

He is back within a few minutes followed by a doctor and two nurses.

“Mrs Ntuli how are you feeling?”

“I am not dying”,I say and some laughter is shared.

The baby bag neatly and nicely set just nearby. We are prepared, when the water broke, I didn't panic but Mabutho had some panic in him. You would swear he has not been through this already.

“Okay, let me check if you are ready to push”,The doctor says.

“I think I am”,I say.

I can feel it, this baby is about to make its way out.

“Okay, let's get you set quickly”

I am positioned to be able to push this baby out. Mabutho hurries to my side and stands next to me.

“It will be okay”,He says.

“On a count of three,you should push”,The doctor mentions.

Just two attempts and the baby slipped out. The process wasn't as daunting but quicker than I thought.

They cleaned me up, stich me up and also cleaned my child. It's a baby boy, we didn't really mind whatever gender we have but it has been said before that I might have a boy.

Mabutho's eyes are full of life in an instant as he looks at his son.

“He looks just like me”,He says like he can not believe he just have a photocopy of himself.

I didn't expect much though from this child, babies tend to betray their mother's in terms of looks and who they look like.

“We have to take him away for a bit”,The doctor says and the nurse takes our baby away.

We are stuck with baby naming but agree that we still have atleast 3 days before we can have a final word.

I am changed, so as the bed I am on and soon I am in fresh pyjamas. Visitors are allowed in and I am not drained at all even though I would like to have sleep later.

“That was quick”,MaThabethe says.

Yes it was, everything just happened quiet fast.

“Phela ingane encane ziyazikhiphela ingane(The young ones can easily give birth)”, Mabutho's aunt says.

“We will wait just a few then we will try for another one”,Mabutho says.

“Ayi Wena,You already have two children let them grow up a bit first and Wena Busisile, don't let this one bully you”,I giggle.

“Yebo ma”

“Mabutho go and get something to eat for Busisile”MaThabethe mentions.

He is not happy about that but he doesn't argue. He knows his mother is chasing him away from this room.

He gives me a perk before he leaves the room.

“How are you feeling?”

“I am happy”,I really am. I wish that I could've shared this moment with other people who love me.

IMINATHI

Whoever that created school after high school should have been put on exile for something so vile and cruel that carries on from generation to generation. Okay maybe it is because I am just having a bad day and not that I really hate school. Bongani will come and fetch me and we will have to leave and go to see his brother and Busisile. Apparently she is supposed to be due soon plus I haven't seen Busisile in a while too. I think it will all work out, soon I am going to the Ntuli family to be introduced as a wife there and in December we will get to do the rest of what is left between Bongani and I.

I drag my feet going to the car and he hops out, waits for me to reach him and he takes me into his arms and gives me a hug.

“How are you Sthandwa sami?” ,He says.

“Hi baby” ,I lay a kiss on his lips.

“I am tired”

“I can see, come let's go” ,Please.

We get inside the car and he drives off. I close my eyes and rest my head on the seat.

“Do you want anything to eat?”

“No, not really but we should pass by the shops to get something for your brother and Busisile.”

“Okay, no problem”

“Can I rest a bit?” ,I ask. I know he doesn't like it, he would rather get an energy drink for me just to stay awake and talk to him while he driving.

“Okay”,Thank you!

I quickly close my eyes and relax my body.

The drive doesn't seem to long as we get home quiet quickly. I rush to the bedroom and take off my clothes before I go to take a quick shower in the bathroom, I feel alive once again after and then I step out of the shower. I wrap a towel around me before I make my way to the bedroom and I pull something I will wear from the closet and a bag to pack some of my things and also Bongani's. He steps into the room once I am done with getting dressed with a plate of food. No he cannot cook to save his life, his food is for a hungry bachelor and so he settles for things that are ready made and quick for the oven too.

It's store made food and I don't mind. I thank him, he must have ordered something while I was still showering.

“What do you want for me to pack for you?”

“Anything”,He says and sits on the bed.

I pack things for him, things that he approves as well before I pack my things and I am done.

I join him on the bed and we eat together.

“I am so happy we are together”,he says and I giggle.

“I know that I am fun”,He laughs.

“You are truly something Imi”

“Is your family going to give me a new name?”,I have to ask.

“Not really, it will depend but I doubt they will”,He says.

“Okay then”

“What you don't want it?”

“I already have two, juggling to remember 3 names would be alot”

“I might just ask them to give you one”,He smiles.

“Dont let it be something weird baby”

“I won't trust me”,I lean in and give him a kiss and he kisses me back before we break it off.

“We have to finish off so we can leave”,I say.

DUDU

The past few months I have set foot in this City has made some changes in my life that I never thought would happen at the pace that they are in. I never thought that we would be this far in a short space of time but I guess that our God is looking out for us.

Mbheki and I move from his friend's place, much to me getting comfortable living there but his friend understood and was saddened that now he will come back to a cold home as I always woke up and prepared them for work and they came home to a clean house and a cooked meal but I am sure if he gets someone , a woman he loves for that matter and marry her, he will have that all back.

His uncle got us a place in Morning side,Durban. A start for us and something I was rather looking forward too, I have decided to let my guard down after the relation reunion and soon enough these men are planning to take a trip back home to reunite the brothers. Life is going...great I should say. Things have really changed for us for the better. Mbheki is enrolled in a business course to learn about running a business and also his uncle is really preparing him to take over, I wondered why he did not have children but I guess it is a blessing in disguise.

I for one have been placed in a position to choose what I want to do, Busisile and myself have always dreamt of being in university, studying and being together in the world but then I am not with her now. I asked to go and study and fulfill the dream me and my best friend have always had and I was granted that too, now I just have to wait for my application to be approved for the following year then things will go great.

I have been checking up on my sister and she quiet happy where she is and I am also happy for her too.

I also got the chance to do my driver's licence while I am still home and I have obtained it, I was quiet happy though I was scared too but I am glad that it was over.

Things between Mbheki and I have been okay, for the both of us. A part of me is scared of loving him and another wants to be with him and he has been good to me and treating me well but his uncle puts some pressure on us that I get scared too.

Today I am in the house, I just did my usual and I have already made a friend with the girl who lives next door. She lives with her mother and she is around my age too. I don't want to keep her that close to me but we do get along.

My phone rings as I am in the bathroom just finished taking a bath. I rush to it and answer the call.

“Hello”

“I am still stuck at the rank with my uncle, I will not be there anytime soon”, Mbheki says.

I sigh, we had promised to go together and get some groceries done but I guess that I should go on my own.

“Its okay”

“I am sorry, I will make it up to you”, He says.

“Its fine, I will get things done. Don't worry”

“Okay, I love you”, He says and I hang up with my heart beating fast.

I love him too, I want to tell him that but I feel like I am betraying Busisile. I should be taking care of her brother not loving him.

I quickly get dressed before I get my bag and the car keys to my small Picanto. A gift I got from the suddenly rich uncle just go get me by and I love it so much. I have never had a car in my life, even at home so this was the biggest gift I have ever recieved in my life.

I get out of home and go to the car and I drive to the mall, I am still getting the hang of things

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yes at times the car switches off in the middle of the road and sometimes not but I am still yet to get used to it.

I make it to the mall safe and sound.

I get out of the car and I make my way inside, I need the supermarket quickly and I will get what we need them I will be in and out. I see a woman that I have seen before, she rather looks familiar then I remember that she is one of Busisile's

sister wives. I wonder what she is doing here but I find myself going towards her just to greet.

“Sawubona ma”,I say and she smiles. She is really beautiful.

“Sawubona ngane Yami unjani?(hello my child, how are you?)”

“I am well ma, how are you?”

“I am well as well”,I can see she is a bit confused on where she knows me from.

“I am Busisile's friend from back home,Dudu. I thought I should greet”

“Oh,I see. You recently moved here?”

“Yes, I stay in morning side ma”

“Ouu, nice.”,I like her aura.

“Maybe I should take your number in case”,She says.

I am glad she asked for it.

I give it to her and she thanks me.

“ Thank you for coming to greet”

“Yes ma, go well”

“You too my child”, we part ways and I go and get my grocery done.

BUSISILE

Busisile the baby bringer is forgotten about and the Ntuli son is all that is in the mind of this man, he has been hogging our little boy in his arms for some time now until he fell asleep and the nurses decided to take him away before he could remember that there is a Busisile too in here.

I eat some of the food that the hospital has provided. This place is top service and I am grateful for it.

“Do you want anything else?”, Mabutho asks.

“I would like a blanket. A small one for at night”

“I will tell ma to get it”, I nod my head and thank him.

“I think it's time I went to baba and discussed taking you as mine fully”, I look at him.

“Meaning”

“Being my wife and not his”, He says.

“What are you going to do? How will that happen?”

“Dont worry about it, I will get through it okay?”, I nod my head and he kisses my cheek.

“So you agree?”, He asks.

“Yes, I love you and I want to be with you”, He smiles.

“I love you so much Mabusi”,He kisses my lips and I kiss him back. I love him so much.

“Ayibo this is a hospital let the sick recover!”,It's MaThabethe. Her voice is just noticable. We break the kiss and she walks in all alone this time with some plastics and a car seat too.

“Mah, what is that”

“Things for my second grandchild.”,She smiles.

“Thank you ma”

“You are welcome Mabusi”,She says and laughs while looking at Mabutho.

“When did you buy all of this?”,Mabutho asks.

“I bought it at the mall with my time and money”,she says.

“Mmmh”

“I bumped into a friend of yours Busisile, nice girl”,I am confused. I don't have friends here.

“Which friend ma?”,I ask who can claim to be my friend in Durban. I only know Monde and Iminathi is all away there with her man.

“She said she is a friend from home, her name is Dudu I think”,My heart skips a beat.

“Dudu?where is she?” ,I ask.

“Calm down baby”,Mabutho says.

Oh my, my friend.

“I took her number in case”,She says and I feel like crying.

“Thank you ma”,she smiles.

We sit together for a while before visiting hours end and they had to leave. She left the number with me and I quickly punched it on my phone and it rang a few times before it was answered.

“Hello, who am I talking to?”

“Dudu”

“Yes?”

“Its me, Busisile”

“Busisile?Oh my soul, I am so happy to hear from you! I miss you so much!”

“Me too Dudu, I tried to go and see you but your sister told me you left”

“I did, I live in Durban now with your brother. I am just taking care of him, nothing more”,She says.

“A lot has happened in my life, I have a lot to tell you but for now I have a baby”, She gasps.

“A baby? Oh my, how old is he?”

“A few hours old, I just gave birth”

“Oh my soul Busi! This is great news, your uncle and brother will be happy!”

“Uncle?”

“Yes, we found your father's rich brother.”, What?

“Wow, I miss Mbheki. Tell him I love him so much”

“We will come and visit you and the baby”, I am happy to hear that.

“I would love that”

I tell her where I am ending the conversation with promising to see each other and the endless I love yous before we end it.

I really love my friend and I wouldn't trade her for anything.

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The following day comes so quickly that I had to get myself ready and so as the baby, I am excited, more excited about seeing a part of me that I had before I got married.

I never wanted to give up any relation I had with the people of the past and surely I will not start now.

I am now in my new clean pyjamas and I am just ready and waiting. I even asked a nurse to help me tie my hair properly and look nice. I asked her if I look good and she laughed at me and told me that I look okay.

Now as I wait, the clock strikes 11, I asked Mabutho to bring some ribs for me on his way here so that I can have something nice to eat.

Soon I hear footsteps and deep voices and my friend emerges first holding a big gift bag and her hand bag. She rushes to me and hugs me and I hug her back holding her tightly.

“I can't believe you are here”, I say.

“I am here”, She says.

I see my brother too, he comes closer and gives me a hug while an old man stands by looking at us.

“How are you Mntaka Ma?”, He asks.

“I am well, how are you? You look different”

“We have been taken care of”, He says.

“Are they taking care of you?”, He asks.

“Yes”, he nods his head.

I know he never wanted me to get married to Mphemba but I got married anyway. I couldn't defy my parents.

"I am not with Mphemba anymore. It's a long story", I can see a glimpse of joy in his eyes.

"This is Bab' Sibisi, we call him that. He is our uncle Busi, Malume this is your niece Busisile"

"Hello", I say.

"Sawubona Ndodakazi, how are you?"

"I am well baba, how are you?"

"I am well".

"I have been dying to meet you since I heard about you", I smile.

"I am glad to meet you too", I say.

The nurse wheels in the baby and soon Dudu is over the mood with him.

"He looks so chubby and cute"

"He looks nothing like you", Mbheki says.

"He looks like his father", I say.

"Where is the father?", The uncle asks.

"He will be here soon", I say and they nod.

Soon they are tossing the baby around. The uncle hogging my son now in awe mentioning about the things “Mkhulu”, Will do for him.

I am happy to see parts of me here with me.

BUSISILE.

I didn't think that in a time like this that I would have my family near by or have someone that is beside a Ntuli near me who would be here to support me and see me. Seeing my friend, brother and now my new uncle just made things better for me. Made me feel that I do have people who actually love me and it is not Mabutho and MaThabethe alone but parts of my family as well. I wonder why my father has never mentioned his brother. Quiet frankly he has never mentioned his family more ever and I assumed that he must be all alone and have now one in the world beside us. That is what I have always assumed but I guess with this, it's not the case but something different.

I have fed my son by the help of the nurses. This hospital has great service and I like the way they do things. They make sure that my baby and I are comfortable too. He is here asleep in his little cot and I am just trying to get myself to the bathroom. I do with time and I do what I need to do, change my cotton pad and then wash my hands after I am done before I walk out. I find Mabutho here already staring at his sleeping son. He sees me wobbling my way towards the bed and he comes and helps me. I am not in much pain but I don't want to put any pain on down there. He gets me on the bed and shares a kiss with me and I smile.

“How are you doing today Mama?” ,He asks.

“I am well, how are you?”

“I couldn't wait to see you but umah took me somewhere first before I could even come here”

“Its okay, I understand. ” ,He just nods.

“I brought some food for you as well” ,He says.

“Thank you baby,I had visitors too” ,He frowns.

I hardly know anyone either than his family members.

“Who?”

“My brother and friend. I even have an uncle” ,I say.

You cannot miss the joy in my voice. I am really happy and it seems like the uncle.is taking good care of Mbheki and Dudu too.

“Oh that's nice, how were they?”

“Amazing, I am just happy” ,He smiles.

I am happy for you baby. I really am.

He gives me a kiss and then we break it up, soon his brother and Iminathi walk in followed by another set of his siblings.

“Hello” ,Iminathi rushes to me and hugs me.

“I haven't seen you in a while. How are you moment?” ,I smile as I hug her back.

Yes I haven't seen her in a while. The last time I saw her she wasn't engaged to Bongani and now she is. I am happy for her and happy that she will be part of this family. I just hope she can handle the other wives as they tend to be harsh at times to other people.

“Yes, being pregnant and all, I couldn't move alot as I would've liked to” ,We break the hug.

I greet everyone else who is in the room. Soon the baby is picked up and is being admired and passed around like a sack of potatoes. The girls gawk over him and kiss him, they ask me his name but so far we are still blankenwith the father and we don't want to leave the hospital without giving him any proper name as yet. We also don't want to rush the name giving as we don't want to give him a name that he wouldn't like and us we wouldn't like in a long run.

They understand our reasons and are in full support of them so the baby will remain to be called baby Ntuli for now by the hospital and I am okay with that. Mabutho being praised and raised with having his first son and they encourage him to have more kids in the future and not stop here. I would love that but not for now. For now I would like to take a break.

MANDISA

I just heard that Mabutho has a child with his "Step mom", and I don't know how to feel about this. I am lying, I know how to feel and I am not happy at all. Why am I not happy? The fact that they are living the life better and handling things better than I did when Mabutho and I broke up. I still love him, though it will take time for me to actually get over him but I do still love him and I wish that I didn't. The fact that they have a son together rubs me off in some way and I don't know how to comprehend everything and just feel about everything that is happening right now.

"Mandisa", it's my dad.

I have been home for a few months now and soon I will go back to work. Though I wish that I can extend my stay until my daughter is at least a year old.

"Dad", I appear in the kitchen that he is in.

He offers me a bowl of fruits and I take some thank him for his hospitality.

"Let's talk", He says.

"Okay", Some silence prevails between us and before I know it, he speaks.

“I know that you are having a hard time during this parent hood and being a single parent”,He says.

I nod my head.

“Yes dad it is”

“How is the father?”,Parts of me want to say bad things about Mabutho but he is a gold father and he loves his daughter.

“Things are good. He is a great father”,I say

“I am happy to hear that. I am happy that you guys are being civil and okay just for your daughter and putting her first”

“She is priority”

“I know and that's why I commend you both”,He says.

Well thank you for that voice dad. I didn't even know I needed to hear that. That even though me and Mabutho are not together anymore but the fact that we make co- parenting work for our daughter brings some satisfaction in my heart and I like that.

DUDU

We arrived back home just a few hours ago, I fished up for Ubabu'Sibisi and they had a conversation with Mbheki about going back home and actually seeing his brother with the kids. He mentions how he misses him and how they haven't seen

each other in so many years too. I am sure I would love to see my sister. I also miss her despite anything else and when they go to attend their family issues, I will also go and attend to my sister and spend some little time with her.

He left after everything, promising to see us soon and for us to go and see Busisile some other time too with the baby. I cannot believe that she is a mother now, I didn't expect it to happen like this. I thought we would share the journey but some things, like cannot do in your way instead it will do it in its way.

I am in the living room

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watching TV when Mbheki joins me and he sits next to me.

“What are you watching?”, He asks. Staring at the cooking show I am watching.

“I am watching Chopped”, I say.

He nods his head like he understands what it is but I know he will not ask further.

“I am happy you are here”, I say and turn to him.

He turns to me, taken aback by my words and what I am saying to him.

“What do you mean?”

“That I am happy you chose to take me into your life like this. You would've moved to the city on your own but you offered to take me and I am grateful”, He smiles and pulls me closer to him.

“I love you, that's why”, he says it.

I am in a bit of a shock as I hear him say it but I return it by saying.

“I do too”, He kisses my lips and I accept him.

I don't want to fear anything when it comes to this man, I might lose him just because of what I might fear and so I would take the risk and be with him.

IMINATHI

A baby is something so precious and pure that you have to bring the best aura you have around one. Busisile gave birth to this beautiful thing and I couldn't get my mind off that baby up until we left. Even now I am excited even on her behalf on how motherhood will treat her but she is a strong woman so I know that things will go better than I would think.

We are now headed to where Bongani's aunt resides. We will sleep there and it will be my first time actually staying there this weekend.

I have called Kamva, he asked me about life and my man as well and I told him. I am okay with my family, I have no beef with them. What happened then it is all in the past now and I would like to believe that I am over it too. We have a lengthy call and after some time we say our goodbyes and hang up from the call too.

Bongani places his hand on my thigh and I look at him.

“Do you know how much I love you?”, He asks.

“No”, I giggle after that.

“I love you so much that it is endless love”, I smile, blush to be exact.

“Stop baby you are making me blush”

“I am serious”

“I love you”, I kiss his cheek.

I really do love him and he has been nothing shorter than greatness.

BUSISILE.

The food here at the hospital isn't as bad as MaThabethe had said to be, she mentioned how it's unpleasant but I do not even see what she has mentioned because I really like the food, yes some greens and foods are tasteless but others I think I can

down just for the next day or two before I am discharged. The night is slowly creeping in and another day ends with me being a mother. I don't know what to name my child but what I know is that he will be precious. Maybe some of the family members from the Ntuli home have a name already for him. His little bed is beside me and soon the nurses will come and take what is their for the night. I slowly get off the bed and go to his, hover over him as he has his eyes closed. I don't even know where to start with this journey I am going to embark outside of this hospital but I hope it's pleasant for us.

We are discharged, the doctor told me that I can go home with our child, I am happy that little Ntuli is going home. My brother and uncle said that they will pass by just to see us and I am well expecting them too. I hope that Dudu is also on her way too just so that I can have a moment to catch up with my friend too. I am sure she has a lot of questions that she wants answers for and I will gladly give that to her. I do need someone I can talk to and that is her.

We get to the house Monde is here so as her mother and MaThabethe too, she is going to leave when she wants to. That is what she said and she mentioned that Mphemba doesn't have much of a choice. We walk inside the house with Mabutho following behind me with the baby things that I was presented with while I was in the hospital.

“Hello, welcome back home”, Monde says while making her way towards me and then she uncovers the baby.

“Oh he looks so cute”

“Everyone says that”

“Babies are cute anyway when they are just born”, I giggle.

MaThabethe makes her way towards us and takes the baby.

“Kodwa mfana ka gogo”, She says holding him closer to her chest.

“Monde, take Busisile to her room and make sure she is comfortable”

“My brother and uncle are coming too”

“We will prepare for them”, She says.

Monde takes me upstairs and we get in the main bedroom. This room is quiet huge and I still cannot get over how this house is a house I live in with the man I love. I share with him. I get in the room and I am settled after some time. Monde tells me that she will get me something to eat and I thank her. I am being pampered and sitting like this without doing much majority of the time. Mabutho walks into the room and he locks the door behind him.

“Monde is still going to come back”.

“I know. I just want to spend some little time with you before you are taken away from me”,I laugh.

“I wouldn't be taken away from you. You know that”,He gets on the bed and kisses my lips.

“I love you, you know that?”

“Yes I know And I love you too”,I say.

“I have talked to Umah about what I said and she agrees with me”

“Now we have to get through your father”,I say.

“I will, don't worry”° | gives me a little kiss and a knock comes through the door and the handle is moved.

“Sisi Busi!” ,It's Monde.

“I am in here! Mabutho go and open the door”,He groans and gets up from the bed then he unlocks the door then opens it.

“I am here to bring food for Busi”,she says.

“Okay”,He takes it and she leaves before he closes the door.

“Come we will share”,I say.

He gets on the bed with the plate.

It has been just close to 4 months now. Things are picking up in life, well I would say from my side I know that things are picking up well. Iminathi was introduced to the Ntuli family, the most perfect thing I have ever witnessed and the happiness that radiated between her and her partner was just something beautiful to watch. My son is growing so as Mabutho's daughter too. She is really grown now and looks more and more like her father so as the little one I have. They have betrayed us the mother's in not even looking the slightest bit like us but also Mabutho is good looking so I do not have any problem with that.

Mabutho's farm business is picking up. Yes it is not at the rate as it was when he was in his father's farm but it is going in a way that you can see the progress that is there. I miss the farm house though from time to time but I am happy with where we are as well. MaThabethe is really looking out for us as her children and it warms my heart to even have her in my life.

I have just changed my son and fed him and now he is asleep. MaThabethe left last month when Mphemba complained about missing her so much. I mean that man loves that woman so much and I could see that more than the other wives but Who am I to know how other people in love look like?

I lay my little boy in his cot and then I grab his nappy bin and make my way out of the bedroom and go downstairs and go outside. I throw the plastic with used nappies inside the bin outside and I make my way inside the house. I quickly check on him and if he is sleeping well before I go downstairs and make some food for myself and get down to cooking some lunch for Mabutho. Maybe when he comes back he will be hungry. I don't know for how long he will be gone so might as well be prepared. My phone rings and I quickly take it and it's Dudu, yes we call each other often and also she has been visiting me alot since we found each other and we haven't yet went back home to enquire about my father and his extended family. Our uncle has been great too as well. I feel like I have a father in my life and people who I can lean on mostly.

I answer my phone.

“Hello”

“Please buzz me in, I am outside”,She says and I giggle.

“Okay,I am coming now”,I say and then hang up.

I quickly buzz her in and I leave the kitchen. I rush upstairs to check on my son and he is awake. Has his eyes open. I pick him up and make my way downstairs with him. I thought he would still be asleep now. It wasn't long before he shut his eyes and

now he is away. I wait for Dudu and she makes her way inside the house and I have never see my friend like this before.

“What happened?” ,I ask and she comes towards me and hugs me.

“Whats wrong Dudu?” ,I ask.

“I just need you” ,She says and she starts sobbing.

I don't know what to do. I just comfort her and let her cry brushing her back but it is not long until the baby cries and we break the hug and I have to attend to him.

I hush him until he calms down and I pull his car seat and put him in there and attend to the messy Dudu. Her eyes indicate that she has been crying for some time.

“Please tell me what is wrong?”

“I am not a virgin anymore” ,She says and I am taken aback by what she is saying.

“What happened?” ,I will not lie. I am shocked but at the same time a part of me feels like I shouldn't be but keeping ourselves for marriage has been a thing for us.

“I don't know Busisile.I don't know I just...things happened you know” ,She says.

“When did it happen?” ,I ask.

“Just last week”,She says and I look at her.

“Okay Uhm do you regret it?”,I don't even know what to ask.

“I do a bit, I don't know but I feel so bad.”

“I am sorry”,I comfort her as she covers her face with her hands as she cries.

I keep on rocking the car chair with my leg here and there just to distract the baby.

We stay in silence for some time and she finally stops crying and looks at me and smiles.

“I am here to have some fun, I shouldn't be crying for something I agreed on right?”

“It's okay to feel like you rushed things from time to time”

“I didn't think it will feel this way.”

“Do you like whomever you gave it to?”,I ask.

“I love him Busi, I don't know why it hurts like this. Maybe it's because I thought he felt the same way for a while”

“What did he do?”,I ask. I want to know who is this man who has the audacity to do this to my friend.

“Things are not the same as before. He is not as consistent and as caring as he was before. When I knew him. Ever since he

made new friends it has been a different story. I ...I don't know",she sighs.

"You can sleep over here. I will tell Mbheki you are not coming back tonight",I say.

"Its fine. Don't tell him, I don't want him to bother with my depressed self"

"Are you sure?" ,I ask.

"Yes",She says.

"Okay, do you want anything?" ,I ask.

"Can I go and lie down a bit?"

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I nod.

We get up and I show her a bedroom downstairs and she gets inside and closes the door behind her. I am worried about my friend and I didn't feel this way when I gave it up on Mabutho. Maybe it's because he made things better for me. I quickly attend to my baby and get my phone. Maybe getting a male point of view will be better. I quickly dial him and it rings and he answers.

"Themba lami"

"Sothole, how are you?"

“It is like you knew I needed to hear from you”,I smile. This man has a way of making me blush out of nowhere.

“I know what you need. Baby I need something Neh?”

“O...kay”

“Dudu is sleeping over tonight. She is not okay and I don't want her being alone and it's girly stuff. Can she sleep over?”,I say.

“I don't have a problem. What's wrong?”

“Its girl stuff”,I say.

“I can take it”,He says and I laugh. He joins me.

“Uthanda indaba Sothole”,He chuckles.

“Okay then, I will see you soon. Kiss my favourite person for me”Thats his son.

“I will”,We hang up and I sigh. I hope that my friend gets better.

DUDU

Things...change and people do change as well. I didn't think that the change will affect me this much and I didn't think that for one he would loose his touch and the fact that I know him. I thought I knew Mbheki but now I don't. He goes out with friends now to places of fun and what not and his friends seem as people of profile too that is a bit high just like his uncle's standards. We did seal the deal in our relationship and actually

wanting to give us a try 4 months ago but now things have changed in just a matter of a few weeks.

I gave him my virginity. The night was beautiful, I don't want to lie but the negligence after it was what made things bitter for me and makes me regret partially giving it up. I wish I waited but what is done is now down.

The pillow is wet, I sniff and wipe my face too in the process as well. I don't want to worry Busisile about her brother and my problems.

I don't want to taint the image she has of her brother just by mentioning how we are at the moment. She doesn't even really know that we are dating. I didn't want to disclose it soon. I also didn't want to involve her in our relationship in a sense where at times she would have to choose between my battle or her brother's battle.

I flip the pillow before laying on it again and my phone vibrates in my jacket. I sigh and take it out. It's him and his name flashes brightly on my phone. I put it away and ignore it. It stops and starts again and a part of me wants to hear what he wants to say. Why he is calling me. I know I should be ignoring him but I want to hear him.

So I answer the phone. I keep quiet and wait for him to speak.

“Sthandwa sami”, My heart melts.

It shouldn't be doing that. I don't want it to do that.

“Mbhekizizwe”, I say.

I hear him sigh.

“Where are you?”, He asks.

“Far away”

“Will you come back home?”

“No, you can stay there alone. It's fine”

“I don't want to”

“Maybe you can go with your friend and go with the girls you are always with”, He sighs again.

“I am sorry, please can you come back home so we can talk about everything”, He says.

“I don't want to hurt myself so no.”, He says.

“I love you Dudu, I want you to know that”, Tears prickle my eyes as I think about him with another woman. These women from the city and I cannot compare to that. I am just a fat thing and they are slim and nicely shaped.

“I love you too, bye”, I hang up before I find myself sobbing and holding onto the pillow.

I know I am not the only girl he has slept with from here and I don't think I would be the last. His behaviour showed that and I caught on. I just wish that he was still the same man from 4 months ago.

BUSISILE.

I cooked and took the food to Dudu just so she can eat and she did eat shame. I think she has been crying all over again until she passed out and slept. Mabutho told me that he will be here in a few minutes. I have prepared his meal and also my baby is asleep now. He has been for over an hour and yes he is still breathing too. I check every minute I get just to make sure that he is okay as he is a bad sleeper at times.

I hear the car outside and wait for Mabutho and he soon walks in through the doors. He has flowers in his hands and it's a big batch too. He smiles my way and I return the favour.

"These are beautiful", I say getting closer to him.

"These are for you", He says.

"For me?", He nods his head.

"Yes for you baby. I want to spoil you and make you feel special", He says.

I get closer to him and kiss his cheek.

"These are beautiful. Thank you so much Sothole"

"You are welcome baby"

"I cooked. Can I dish up?"

"Please baby, is the baby asleep?", We walk to the kitchen and I
out the batch on the counter.

"Yes he is. He has been awake for so long he needs his rest", He
chuckles.

"I wanted to sit with him"

"You will later on Mabutho. Don't wake the baby up"

"I will not. "

"Good", I dish up for him and he goes and washes his hands.

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DUDU

Sleep consumed me quiet quickly and I am happy that I got to sleep and forget about my problems for a while. I woke up when it was already dark outside and Busisile knocking on the door was what was doing the most in waking me up. I slowly get off the bed and make my way to the door and she stands before me when I have it open.

“I am just checking up and on you and asking you to come and eat”,She says.

“I am fine”

“What is going on? I am worried about you”,You cannot miss the concern in her voice.

“Nothing, I just have a headache and I am not feeling too well”,I say with a weak smile accompanying my statement.

She stands firm and watches me as I say that.

“You know I know you and you cannot lie to me”,I swallow.

“I know”

“I will give you some time off but soon I will like to know what's going on”,She says.

“Thank you”

“Come and eat”

“I am fine, don't worry”, My phone rings and she looks at me waiting for me to move.

I excuse myself and I go and get my phone and it's her brother. I sigh and decline the call and put my phone down.

“Should I bring your food here?”

“No, I am fine. Don't worry”, My phone rings again and I take it.

“It might be important.”, She says and turns leaving me.

It's still him. I sigh and sit on the bed before I answer the call.

“Baby, please tell me where you are”, He says.

“I am fine, I am safe”

“I want us to talk”, He says.

“We are talking now”

“Please. I don't like this”, He says.

“Mbheki...”

“Please”, I sigh.

“I am at Busisile's house”

“Okay, I am coming. Please don't move”

“I have nowhere else to go”, I roll my eyes.

“I love you”, I hang up after that. I then go through social media and look at the pictures that this girl sent to me. I just started using Facebook and this is what I encounter on. I don't even know this woman but what I know is that she knows Mbheki and it has been something for a while. What shook me is the “Stay away from my man”, Message followed by these pictures and I have never felt my heart in pain. Their friends are there in the pictures too and I know that they go together to these fun locations of theirs.

I go and use the bathroom and after some time I get a call from him telling me that he is outside. He doesn't want to come and disrespect Busisile and Mabutho too on their property. I walk downstairs and I don't see anyone so I will just send a message to Busi that I am outside but I will be back soon. I get out of the house and he is by the gate. The security buzzes me out and I thank him before I get to him. I stand a good distance and he looks at me.

“I miss you”, He says.

It has only been a few hours since I was away.

“It hasn't been that long since I have been away”, I say.

“I know baby.”, I sigh.

“Please can we talk about whatever that is bothering you”

“Who is Vee?”, I ask.

He places his hands in his pocket.

“She is nothing”

“She is clearly something if you guys even have pictures together. Lots of them that we don't have”, He walks closer to me.

“Dudu I...”

“I am still talking Mbheki”, I say and he keeps quiet.

“What do you want from me? You should've stopped us going on if you had someone else. You know how I feel about that”, I say.

“I know and I am sorry”

“Have you ever slept with her too?”

“No, we have only kissed once”, He says and I look at him. His body language doesn't say he is lying and his face I can see he is telling the truth.

“You have hurt me”, I say and he swallows.

“I am sorry baby”, He says and moves closer to me and takes me into his arms and I start crying all over again.

“I am sorry baby, I am deeply sorry. I shouldn't have done something like that and I promise that it will never happen. That I will never put you in this position. I asked you to come

with me here because I wanted to build a life with you in it. I am sorry for breaking your heart. Ngiyaxolisa mama”,He says and I sniff.

He holds onto me tightly.

I keep my silence. I don't know what to say honestly but things are not going to be the same anymore.

“Cut that girl out of your life or cut me off your life”,I finally say.

“I will cut everything that attaches me to her”,Meaning his new friends too. I hope that he does.

BUSISILE

I am worried about Dudu, she doesn't want to tell me what is wrong with her and that is what worries me the most more than anything. She is not even eating as I have offered food her way. I get in the bedroom and Mabutho has put the baby to rest. I am grateful for this man and I love him so much too.

“How is your friend?”,He asks.

“She doesn't want to eat or tell me what is wrong”

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I say.

“Give her some space and she will tell you what is wrong when she is ready”,He says and I sigh.

“Okay, I will do just that for now. I just hope that she is not dying alone inside”, I say and he comes towards me and holds me by my waist”

“She will not die alone. You are here for her and you love her”, He says.

“Okay, I hear you”, We share a kiss.

“I want us to talk about something”, He says.

“What?”

“Us, getting married and everything”, I slowly smile.

“You mean that...”

“I want us to officially get married.”

“What about Iminathi and Bongani?”

“They are waiting for Iminathi to finish her degree as she wants her surname on it. She wants to wait”

“Oh, okay. I would love that”, I say.

“Then when the baby is 1 you can go to varsity”, My smile widens.

“Really?”

“Yes”, I hug him.

“Oh thank you so much Sothole”

He holds me back.

"I love you mama"

"I love you too Sthandwa sami"

Having this man in my life has been a blessing and I do not regret being with him. I just regret how things went about with us but being with him is what I love more than anything.

NARRATED.

It has been too many nights with Ndumezulu sleeping in MaThabethe's room that even MaKhumalo has been on the edge of it. It was better when she wasn't here but now that she is back from nursing her son's illegitimate child she is taking their husband. Ndumezulu has been cooped up in her room too much that he has forgotten that he has other wives too since MaThabethe came back.

Here he is laying in bed waiting for MaThabethe to come out of the ensuite bathroom and she does after time. Her skin looks flawless as he sets his working eyes on her. He loves the wobbly thighs and love handles that she has. It may not be the same as it was when he first saw her but the shape is still there for him to admire. He strokes his belly and watches his wife apply her face cream before she pulls the gown off her skin and then turns to him as he stares at her.

"Where are you sleeping tomorrow?", she asks.

She knows the answer but she wants to be sprawled all over the bed and turn however she wants to. This man doesn't want that, he wants to sleep next to her as much as possible. She has left before and he doesn't want to make that mistake once again.

"I will sleep here", He says and she looks at him.

"Ayi Ndumezulu. Go and sleep with the others. Isn't it you wanted many wives", She says with a frown.

"But I want to sleep with you"

"There are 7 people in this relationship. You can't make that decision on your own. If you wanted to sleep next to one person for every night for the rest of your life then you should've married one person", She says and pulls the blankets off and gets under the covers.

"But Sthandwa sami..."

"Ayi Ndumezulu, kuyashisa. You are supposed to be sleeping with MaJili or MaGasa", She says and turns her back on him.

He sighs and moves closer to her.

"I love you nolaka lwakho(I love you and your fierstiness", She groans.

"Okay"

“You don't love me?” ,She smiles. She does love him.

“You know the answer” ,He smiles.

“We should go on a vacation like you have wanted” ,He says.

“And the others?”

“I will ask them what they want but I want to go with you first” ,He says.

“I want Zanzibar” ,She says sitting up and looking at this man.

He looks at her too, admires her Beauty. It hasn't faded that she has grown with it. He smiles and is reminded of how he fell in love with this woman. She has always loved finer things in life unlike the other wives and she has always kept him on his toes.

“I love you mama”

“I too baba” ,He kisses her and she giggles like a child.

He loves the sound of that. He loves his wife so much.

DUDU

I had to leave with him, I sent Busisile a message telling her that I have already left and that I will get back to her and come to get my car some other time. I didn't go much into detail when I explained why I had left. It's morning and Mbheki just woke up and we both had breakfast. He told me that he will not be going to work and he has called upon his uncle.

They are planning on going back soon to meet with his parents and get answers on why he has a long lost uncle and that is something that will be happening in just a week or two from now. I just want to see my sister during that time. marriage has been treating her well, she has not really complained much so I am assuming that things are going very well for her.

“Baby, please get ready”, I turn from the sink and look at this man.

He looks all dressed up and ready.

“Where are we going?”, I say.

“I want us to go to the beach then grab something to eat. Have a picnic”, He says and I smile a bit.

“What do you know about picnics?”

“I googled it”, I giggle.

“Uhm, okay. Let me finish here and then get ready”, I say.

“No, I will finish up. Go and get ready”, he says and I nod leaving him with the dishes and then I go and get ready. I can't wait to see what this picnic plan has instore for us. I have never been to one so this will out to be an experience.

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DUDU

The drive was filled with calm music and also the view of this bright day that it is today. I couldn't wait until we got to our destination and we did get to the beach on time. We got out of the car and there were some people on the beach but not very much. He lock the doors of his car and we make our way to the beach then we take off our shoes before we could even go further on the sand. He holds my hand as we make our way and there is a picnic set up just infront of us.

“How did this get here?”

“I organised some people to get it done”,He says and I giggle.

“You are a big shot now”,he chuckles.

“Maybe, maybe not”,We share a laugh.

He helps me sit down and I thank him and he goes around and sit opposite me. He opens the basket and sets up the food for us before he tells me that I can have something and I take the grapes and have them.

“Sthandwa Sami, I am sorry about what happened. It should've never happened in the first place”,He mentions.

“I hear you”

“I am really sorry mama”, He says and I sigh and take another grape.

“I forgive you Mbheki. I really do but I was hurt”

He swallows and looks down shamefully.

“I am sorry”, he says.

I nod my head and grab some cheese and eat and watching the waves form on the ocean.

“This is beautiful”, I turn to him smiling and he returns the smile.

“I am glad you like it”, I really do like it.

It's calming too.

BUSISILE

I am tired. Raising a child is not so nice or should I say not so rosey and I will be doing this for the next few years that will come. Mabutho went to the farm too this morning so I am here stuck on mommy duties with my best friend avoiding me from asking her too many questions about what is really going on in her life. MaThabethe called me this morning asking me how I am and I told her that I am good. I am really good, beside the draining days that parenthood comes with but I am good. Her son is treating me well and everything is just going fine for me.

I decided that I should visit my uncle with my son and so I got him ready and so as my self. I called Mabutho earlier to tell him we are going but his line couldn't go through so I will try him just now before we even leave. My uncle is expecting us to come so I hope that he will be as happy to see us as will be to be visiting him.

I call Mabutho and this time he answers.

“Mawakwami”,he says.

“Sothole, I am here to ask something”,I say.

“Okay, what is it?”

“Me and the baby want to visit Malume. We are bored and he is also bored”,I say.

“Okay, I don't mind”

“Okay”

“Send me your location”

“Okay I will, thank you”

“I love you”

“I love you too”,I hang up and get everything I need and I get out of the house. I have someone who will drive me already here so I am not really in a train smash. I get inside the car with the baby after greeting and the driver greets back before he

drives us off. I send a message to my uncle telling him that I am on my way. I have never really had a sit down with him before. Yes he comes and checks up on us but usually there is everyone else around us so this will be the first time. I am quiet excited actually and see how he is. He is unlike my father though, not too strict but is a person that can talk to.

The drive is not that long because we reach his place and he is already waiting for us by the door. The driver parks the car and we get out and he comes my way with a smile plastered on his face. This man is no doubt related to me. He looks just like me and parts of Mbheki too.

“Ndodakazi”, He says and we share a hug.

“Baba, how are you?”, I ask.

“I am happy that I am now getting visitors from precious people”, I laugh.

“I am happy to be here too”

“I ask aunty to prepare something for you”

“Your wife?”, I ask.

“No, I am single as they come”, I wonder why.

He takes the baby from me and greets him how grandparents greet their grandchildren. I get the rest of the baby's stuff and close the door then I send the location to Mabutho and he

receives it and he sends a reply telling me to tell him when I want to leave. I keep that in mind.

We make our way inside the house and it's really beautiful. Not too big and not too small, but just right.

I see an elderly woman and I greet her.

“Aunty, this is my child, Busisile”, I smile.

“Hello

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I have heard so much about you and Mbheki too”, I smile.

“Nice meeting you”, I say.

The grandpa as disappeared to the living room with his grandson and I am forgotten about for a moment.

I follow after them and I sit down as well.

“I am happy you are here”

“Your home is beautiful”, I say.

“Thank you. This is your home as well”, He says and I smile.

“Thank you baba. For taking care of us. My brother and I so as my best friend”, He smiles.

“I like your friend. I hope your brother is not blind and does what's right before someone snatches her from him”

“It might happen maybe”, I say and he smiles.

You can tell that he is fond of Dudu.

“Would you like anything?”

“Nothibg specific”, He nods.

“Can I ask a question?”, I say and he looks at me.

“Yes”

“Why have you cut contact with your brother?”, I ask and he sighs.

“It is more complicated than you think”, He says.

“I mean, it cannot be complicated”

“Woman issues”

“Such as?”

“Him being with the woman I loved once. That woman choosing him as stability because I was busy building a future for us. Hence the businesses”, He says.

“I am sorry”, I say.

He smiles.

“Its okay, it happened 20 years ago. I am fine”

“Can I ask a question again?”, He nods his head.

“Yes you can”

“Is my mother that woman?” ,I have to ask.

He keeps his silence and looks at the baby.

“I don't know if it's your mother. I don't know if they are still together or not so I wouldn't know”

“Oh, okay” ,I say. I don't want to corner him.

“I have some things I bought for my grandson in my room. I will take it when you guys are leaving.”

I smile.

“Thank you so much”

“You are welcome” ,he says.

DUDU

He has his head rested on my lap, the breeze is not even that harsh but is great. It is getting a bit chilly here and there but I like the way that we are in. I have been taking pictures using his phone and then I went through it and there was nothing that traced to that girl or even his going out pictures. I guess he has really cut them off I guess. Now we are just resting in this peaceful day taking in one breath at a time with what we are doing and he slowly slides his hand under my dress and his hand rests between my thighs.

“Mbheki, people are looking”,I say.

He kisses my knees.

“I know. Don't worry”,He smiles and I just shake my head.

We stay in that comfortable silence.

“What are you hoping for in the future?”,I ask.

He looks at me and then rests his head the way it was.

“I am hoping you achieve your dreams and so as mine beside you and you beside me and get married one day and have many kids!”,He says and I giggle.

“Marriage?”

“Yes, I love you like that Dudu”,I smile.

“We will see”,I say.

“I want us to enjoy this”,He says and I look at him.

“Me too”,I really don't want to rush things but enjoy every moment we have of our lives here.

“I am feeling a bit cold”,I mention.

“We can leave”,I am glad to hear that.

We pack up and he gets up and we now make our way to the car and I am really tired as it is. I just want to get home and lay in bed. I really enjoyed this so much. I don't want to lie.

BUSISILE

Today is the day, the day that we are going back home and the day that Mabutho will get a chance to actually talk to his father and so as my family talking to my parents. I am quiet nervous with everything. Wondering how everything would pan out. I just want to know answers of why everything unfolded the way it did and wasn't there any way that things could've been fixed during that time. I just wonder if our father has ever missed having his brother and actually thought of reconciling with him. I wonder where his whole family is and also I wonder why we saw most of my mother's family and not his, I didn't want to ask my uncle where his parents are but so far as we have known him. He hasn't taken us to go and get introduced to other elders that we might need to know. Maybe he will and he is just wanting permission from his fellow brother to actually take us. Honestly there is alot that could be unfolded on this journey and I am mostly just happy that we have other caring family members out there. It has been a year since I left home, a year in which I haven't seen my parents in and all my other family members and I knew that when I got married into the Ntuli family that my parents will definitely cut contact with me and they did, I am not their child anymore in their eyes.

“Baby, I have packed everything you need”, I hear Mabutho behind me.

I grab the charger and the baby blanket off the bed and turn to him as he is standing by the door.

I will travel with him and we will just meet the others when we get home.

“Okay, I think we have everything now”

“We do”, He says.

I breathe in and out and he comes closer to me.

“Don’t worry, everything will be okay”, he says.

“I hope so, I hope things will go well”

“They will, you need this as much as I do need this and our baby too does need this”, I nod my head.

“Okay, I get that”, He gives me a perk.

“I love you”

“I love you too”, I say.

We give each other brief smiles and then we start moving going out of our bedroom and heading downstairs. We find the baby all strapped up in his car seat and Mabutho picks him up and we walk out of the house. Everyday I just feel like everything is so Surreal. I never imagined that my life would turn out this

way, better and greater for me. I never imagined that in the next year from then that I would be in a happy space, happy place and actually fulfilled about what is happening in my life and I am fulfilled.

I get in the car and Mabutho puts the baby into safety at the back before he closes the door and gets in the front before he starts the car and reverses out of the drive way. I need to learn how to drive one day, just not now. Now I am still a bit fearful so I would rather just wait until I have the courage to actually do it.

DUDU

I turn the volume of the music that is playing a bit up as I hear a gospel song coming on and it touches me well. I love this, I love that these worship songs get to me and to me it indicates that my life needs some God and prayer in them. Yes I didn't grow up with a good bases on beliefs but I think now that I am older and live here I need something to stand my ground on. I am just waiting for Mbheki. We are at the petrol station filling up the tank for our journey ahead. He said he is going to get something for us to munch on while we are going home and then we will pass and go and get his uncle before we drive down going home. I am quiet excited and o also have things for my sister as gifts that I have bought for her since I have stayed here. I really hope she likes them because I do like them.

I see him making his way back to the car and he gets inside. The petrol attendant gets done with his job and Mbheki pays the full amount in cash and gives him extra. I am a bit confused as to why he gives him extra money. He starts the car and I open the little plastic bag with some good things inside.

“Why did you give that man extra cash?”

“I was tipping him, they get tipped you know”, Well I didn't know that.

“I didn't know that”

“Yeah”, Well now I have learnt. I will do better next time.

“How are you feeling about going home?”, He asks.

I smile.

“I am a bit excited about going home. I am just wondering in what state am I going to find my home in since it has been so long since it was occupied”, I say.

“Yeah, I will have to rebuild it for you”, I look at him.

“Why?”, He steals a glance from me.

“Because

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when I am going to be your husband it will be my duty”, I blush and shy away from his gaze.

“You know I am studying and I will get a job one day and do that right?”

“I know Sthandwa sami but, I want to do this for you as soon as possible before there is nothing left of the place you call home.”

“Okay, we will speak about this some other time”, He nods.

“I just wonder how my parents will take this surprise visit”

“Do you think something could go wrong?”

“Yes, things could go wrong. They are not people you can have decent conversations with them at times”, He says.

I just nod my head.

“Everything will be okay”

“I really hope so”, The drive commences and soon we get to his uncle’s house and his uncle comes out as soon as the car is parked on the drive way. He has his suitcase next to him. This man looks like Busi more now that I think of it and look at him properly. The way their nose is shaped and his eyes too are the same as hers. Yes Mbheki and Busi look alike here and there but not that much.

“Ndodana”, He greets Mbheki first and he greets back. Asks how are things and he mentions how they are like they don't see each other almost everyday.

“Makoti, ukahle?”, I am just getting used to that.

Being called uMakoti and Mbheki likes it because he always smiles widely when his uncle refers to me as that. I don't know why though but he likes it. His uncle is very fond of me too, he has mentioned it that even if Mbheki and I don't get together he will find me a decent guy and he will take me as his daughter. That warmed my heart because I have never really had a parental figure in my life until this man came into ours.

I get out of the car and Mbheki helps him load his bag inside the car before I shift to the back seat. The uncle asks me why I am moving and I tell him I am moving for him and he tells me that I should sit in the front and he will gladly take the back seat. I thought I was just doing a decent thing and moving away for an adult.

I get into my seat at the front and wait for Mbheki to get inside the car so we can go.

“How far is Busisile?”, The uncle asks as soon as Mbheki gets inside the car.

“She told me over an hour ago that she has left home.”

“Okay, she will get there first”

“Yes, it is not that long”

“Ndodakazi, how is School?”

"School is well baba"

"I am glad that things are okay", He smiles.

I would not forget what this man has done for us this far.

BUSISILE

The journey going home felt too short for me and for the first time it did. I had rested and also I have fed the baby along the way but still it felt very short. Maybe because we didn't take much stops as I had anticipated. When the Ntuli yards appears just in front of us, I knew that we were back. I knew that the women in there are the people who I will be dealing with during our whole stay but honestly speaking I just missed the home scenery though it wasn't pleasant but I missed it. I see MaThabethe standing over her room and she waits for the car to come to a halt before she rushes towards the car as we get out. She comes my way and hugs me.

"Oh I have missed you, how are you?", She asks and I smile.

"I have been good, thank you ma", I say.

"Where is my first grandson?", She says it like Mabutho's other brothers don't have children.

She quickly goes and gets the little one and we are forgotten about. The kids also come out and surround the car and I am

getting hugs from them, telling me that they have missed me and asking if I have a baby now and I say yes.

They all ask me where the baby is and I tell them and they rush off to MaThabethe who has the baby in her hands. I am nervous. Why wouldn't I be when I am in Mphemba's space. As if he hears me thinking off him, he appears. The other wives have long appeared just that they kept their distance. I don't know what to do now in his presence. MaThabethe goes to him with the baby and they both peak at the baby before he comes our way. Mabutho comes and stands next to me.

"Baba" "How are you?"

"I am well", He nods his head.

"He looks just like you", he says and a crack of a smile forms on his lips.

"He does, so much", Mabutho replies. He turns to me.

"I hope you are well MaSibisi"

"I am well baba", I look down.

I shy away from his gaze.

I can't look at his way any longer. I still feel the shame of what I had done but I am not shameful for being with Mabutho and having our son.

DUDU

Arriving home was something that took a while for us since we got to take some stops and bathroom breaks. Well the bathroom breaks come from me but you do understand what I mean though. I didn't go with Mbheki and his uncle but simply asked to be dropped off home as I want to assess how things are and also clean up, plus I am not going to sleep over at the Sibisi house hold when I am not even related there but they said they will pass by Busisile's in laws and get her so they can all go together. I hope they go well and that everything of theirs goes well too.

The first thing I did when I got home it is to change the bedding and get some cleaning done. It's not dirty but it's dusty here and there so I need a clean space before I could even think of sleeping or doing anything else.

I am sweeping just in the bedroom when I hear someone's footsteps. I pause and wait in anticipation of who it may be and my sister appears. I drop the broom and rush to her.

We share a hug for a moment. Stuck in each other's arms and it feels good to see her after some time of being away from her.

“Oh my Dudu, you look amazing!” ,she says.

“Me? Have you seen yourself?” ,I say and break the hug.

I can see the ring on her finger too. She looks so beautiful. I am happy for her.

“Not like you though”

“You look amazing, marriage is treating you well”

“I am happy and my in-laws are good, so as my husband”

“I am happy for you Sisi wami”, I hug her again and we break the hug after some time.

“So, where is Mbheki? Tell me everything”, I shy away from her and she giggles. Grabs the broom and puts it aside.

“He is there, things have been good. Found his rich uncle and he has been taking care of us”, I say.

“Wow! You are living it up in the city. I hope you brought something for me”, I giggle.

“Don't worry. I did, wait here”, I say.

“No, I am coming with”, We follow each other going out of the bedroom.

BUSISILE.

I had to excuse myself and tell MaThabethe that I have to go somewhere and she told me to not worry about babysitting as she will do it. I am blessed to have her in my corner and I will forever be grateful for her in my life. Mabutho wanted me to

do this alone as this is my journey and also he can't really have much of being there with me because my parents will not recognise him as my partner but it does give me some ease that I am not going back home alone.

My uncle and Mbheki waited for me as I came out of the yard and hurried outside to the car before the other wives had anything to say. I greeted both of them and Mbheki started the car.

“How are you Ndodakazi?(My daughter?)”

“I am well baba, how are you?”

“I am good as well.”,I breathe in and out.

“Where is your boyfriend?”,My brother asks.

“He stayed behind. This is a family matter”,He nods.

“Where is Dudu?”

“She went to her home”,I nod my head.

I hope that she is okay.

I look out of the window as the conversation carries on here and there between the boys. I sigh and look at the house and huts and the dust rising and settling as the car moves. Having a big car in this area is such an advantage. A small car doesn't going around well enough as big cars.

I am nervous. Mainly because my father told me the day I left home that I should never set foot as I am no longer part of the family anymore. That saddened me, I don't want to lie and the thought of how he will react just gets to me at the moment, I just hope that he will be happy to see his brother after so many years. My uncle is eager to see him despite them having the differences that they had from years ago and that would make me and Mbheki happy if they got along. Maybe we will get to know more of my father's side of the family than my mother's. Well know if he has other siblings in the world that we don't know off.

I see the car approaching what used to be my home. It brings back memories. The horror the most and great ones at times. I never really impressed my mother with the little things I tried to do. I was always taught from a young age what to do as a wife once I get married and they were quick to get me married and off I went. I wish they took me to varsity first before getting me married but also I do not fault them in many ways I am just disappointed in them at some things.

“We should get going before it's late for Busi”, My brother says and we all nod.

He opens the door and hops out and I also follow after my uncle opens mine. I thank him and still cannot get over the fact that I look like a grown man. Well I have known I look slightly

like a boy with Mbheki but this just shocks me each and every time.

We walk getting closer to the door. It's almost the afternoon so I am sure my mother has retired from her duties and is at the back of the house doing something or making something to eat for my father. We were not rich but we could get by from time to time. Mbheki knocks on the door once we have reached it and I breathe in and out.

“Dont be scared”,he says.

How can I not? He knows how his parents behave at times.

The door opens and my father is the first one to open.

“Mbheki ho....”,He stops mid sentence when his eyes land on his brother and Myself.

“Sawubona baba”,Mbheki says.

I am too scared to even utter anything.

They hold a gaze with his brother and the look on his face shows that he is not pleased to see him.

“What are you doing here?”,he says to his brother.

I am not shook with the way he is talking but I expected better.

“That is not a way to greet your younger brother”,My uncle mentions.

“Baba,who is at the door?”,I can hear my mother's hoarse voice.

Yes it has been like.that for as long as I can remember.

“Baba we just want to talk”,Mbheki says.

“Talk about what?”,My father says.

He is not even hiding the fact that he doesn't want to see his brother.

My mother appears, covers her mouth when she sets her eyes on me and my uncle.

“Busisile”,She acknowledges me first before anyone else. I want to go to her and get a hug, a hug that I have always wanted from her.

“Mah”,I clear my throat not knowing what to say.

“Wh...what are you doing here?”

“Go back where you come from”,My father says to my uncle.

My mother rushes to me and pulls me away from standing next to my uncle and grabs Mbheki.

“Stay away from my kids”,My mother spits to my uncle. Mbheki yanks his arm from my mother.

“Both of you, you have to explain to us what is going on. This is our family”,Mbheki says.

“Mbhekizizwe don't annoy me. You drag your sister from her in laws to this nonsense!”

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the hoarsy parent says.

“You don't talk to the kids like that. They want an explanation of why I haven't been an uncle in their lives”

“They are doing fine without you,so please!” ,My father hasn't uttered a word since his wife appeared.

We are caught between a rock and a hard place. I want to cry too because of the way my mother is holding me. They hate him, they really hate my uncle and he is such a gentle soul.

“No, mah ngiyeke!” ,I yank myself too from her. Much to her shock.

I have never been one to stand up for myself.

“Baba, this is your brother. What happened years ago should be put aside” ,I say.

“Come here Busi, let's take you home” ,My uncle says and I don't hesitate than to rush to him.

My father angry and my mother shouting for me to get away from my uncle.

He comforts me and ushers me to the car with my mother following behind. My father disappeared with our father.

She holds her long skirt tightly ready to fight this man.

“Busisile come back here!”

“Don't you dare talk to the children like that!”

“Or what? What are you going to do? You are not man enough to do anything”, My mother's big mouth says.

My uncle opens the door for me and gets me inside while my mother is pushing and shoving him out of the way to get to me.

“Get out of that car Busisile!”

“Stop it Khosi”, My uncle warns her.

“These are my children you are turning against me. Not yours and never yours either so keep quiet!”

She points to me.

“Get out of there now!”, I am scared. Scared of my mother. I know when she is like this.

“You are still behaving like I am the one who wronged you Khosi when you jumped beds between me and my brother because he was man enough and I wasn't. I was soft for you and a sissy of a man to you huh?”

“Dont talk about me like that. You wouldn't have raised my kids like your brother did. He is a man more than you”,My heart sinks.

My uncle's face changes and an immediate frown forms on his face.

“What are you saying?”,My mother's mouth is suddenly shut.

“Khosi”,He says.

“Nx, leave me alone”,She says trying to walk away from the little war she was causing but he grabs her arm quickly.

I close the door quickly scared to hear whatever they will talk about but my mother's facial expressions goes back to the way it was when she was breathing fire before she leaves the man in turmoil.

He stands there for a few minutes before I see him sigh, looking down and then he opens the front door and gets in.

“Are you okay?”,I ask.

My mom could've left some marks from all the shoving and whatever she was doing.

“Yes, I am. Are you okay?”,I nod my head and smile.

I wish that my uncle was in our lives before. I love how caring he is and I feel like I really have a father figure in my corner.

I want to go home now. That few minute drama was enough for me for the day.

Soon Mbheki comes out and he doesn't look happy either. He gets in the car and closes the door, starts the car and soon drives off.

“I need to call Dudu”

“Don't inconvenience her”, My uncle says.

“We don't have a near by Bnb”, Mbheki says.

“I can speak to my mother in law and see if they can help”, I say.

They are both quiet.

“It's okay Sisi, we will figure something out”, Mbheki says and I nod.

DUDU

My phone rings and I am done with cleaning and I also went out with my sister to buy something to eat close by and now I am inside the house. Mbheki sent me a message telling me that he is coming with his uncle so I went next door and asked to borrow some mattress and Sponge and they gave it to me. I also went and bought more food incase they get here hungry. I prepared everything and now I am just waiting to hear how everything went. I don't know what to expect actually. I answer my phone that moment.

“We are outside”, I hear his voice.

I drop the call and rush outside. Yes my home is not the best but it will give proper shelter for the night. The bedroom will be used by his uncle and himself and I will just use the living room where I will lay there.

I get to the car and the sun has already set. I greet umalume though I saw him earlier on today and Mbheki is out of the car too. His uncle having a chat with me, seems okay so I don't get to read off how the meeting went. This man talks too much at times so you would never know. I get to help them with their bags and we get inside and I show Malume where he will rest with Mbheki.

“Where will you sleep?”, the uncle asks.

“Dont worry Malume, I have that sorted out”

“Thank you my child. ”, I smile.

I ask to dish up for them but they decline the offer. So they ate where they come from.

I get to the kitchen and leave umalume settling down and Mbheki is still outside. I follow after and go outside and stand near the house watching him as he locks the car. After some time he comes towards me and I look at him. His face has readable expressions and I see all that he is feeling.

“Are you okay?”,I ask.

“No”,He says and I offer him a hug and he takes it.

We stay like that for a moment before we break the hug and he kisses my cheek.

“My mother and father are evil people”,He says.

“Why do you say that?”

“They are evil. They hate Sibisi for the mess they made”,He says.

“I am sorry”,I say.

“Yeah”

“Everything will be okay”,He nods his head and kisses my lips. I giggle and pull away.

“Your uncle is inside”,I whisper and he laughs with me.

“I love you”,I blush.

“I love you too”,I say.

I really do.

BUSISILE.

I am heart broken. On my uncle's behalf, I couldn't even respond to Mabutho when he asked me how everything went because everything went so horribly. I could hear how my uncle was pained but no care in the world was given by my mother and also my father. So she is the woman who got in between brothers. She is evil, very evil and I also feel like I am following in her footsteps except Mabutho is the son and Mphemba is the father. I have been curled up under these blankets since I came back. I haven't even went to check on MaThabethe as yet as.i don't know how I would face her as yet. She is probably with Mphemba. I have been told that he is very clingy onto the lady as well.

The sound of the door opening doesn't move me but I know it's Mabutho. He told me he would be back after I wasn't giving him much answers. It closes and he comes closer. Soon he slips into bed next to me and holds me.

“I don't like it when you are like this”,he says and I sniff.

“Talk to me Mabusi”

“They hate him”,I say and a lump gets stuck on my throat.

I feel sorry for him, I wonder how he feels right now. Eager to see the brother that has wronged you only for him to not want you.

“My father hates him so much, so as my mother”, I say.

He brushes my back as I start crying.

He turns me around to face him.

“I am sorry baby ”, He says.

“They hate him for something they did to him, I hate them too”, I say.

“Ssh baby, hate is a very strong word”

“I do hate them Mabutho. They don't deserve anything pretty as they are not pretty at heart”, He rubs my back.

“You are the sweetest thing on this earth and I don't want this to taint your beautiful heart baby”, I sniff.

He looks at me.

“Okay?”, I nod my head.

“Okay”

“Are you going to eat?”

“No, I am not hungry”

“How about we call your brother and hear from them. Maybe you will feel better”, He says.

I nod my head and he lets me go and gets off the bed to go and get my phone. I wipe my tears and sit up as well. I just also want to know if they are safe and sound. I worry about them alot.

He gets my phone and joins me on the bed and I dial my uncle's number and it rings a few times before it is answered.

“Ndodakazi”, He says and I smile.

“How are you?”, I ask.

I am concerned about him.

“I am okay, well. I am glad to be hearing your voice. I don't get much calls”, I giggle.

That is just sad and cheesy as well but sad.

“Well it's late at night so I am sure they men back home have everything under control”

“They do”

“Are you guys safe?”

“Yes we are safe, are you okay there?”

“Yes, I am fine. I was just concerned about earlier”

“Dont worry, I am not worried are you?”

“Not anymore”

“Thats my girl,tell that boy that you are going to visit me next week with the baby for the weekend.”,I laugh and look at Mabutho who has a wide smile plastered on his lips.

“I will inform him.”

“Okay then”

“I have to go, I will call tomorrow”

“Okay MaSibisi. Have a great night”

“You too”,We hang up after that and I turn to the smiling Mabutho and throw myself in his arms. He kisses my forehead.

“How are you feeling now?”

“Better. Next weekend I am leaving with my backpack”,He frowns.

“Going where?”

“On a Vacation with my uncle”

“I am family too”,I giggle.

“Its just the weekend”

“I wouldn't survive it Busisile”,I laugh.

“Oh, this amuses you”, I nod my head.

“Mmmh”

“I am sorry, I won't go”

“You can go, I don't want your uncle saying I am controlling you”

“You are not”

He is sulking now.

I kiss his lips and he looks at me.

“I love you Ntuli”, He smiles a little.

“I love you too baby”.

DUDU

The night time had just come in moments ago and Mbheki said to give his uncle some space after quickly narrating what had happened when they went back to his home. I didn't expect things to take that turn but it definitely did happen.

He was seated on that old bench I used to use when he came here at times to have the meals that I made for him and I enjoy making meals for him. It just satisfies my heart to know that he has been fed when he is fed after being hungry. I am just packing up things and putting them away so that I don't have any problems in the morning. That I will wake up and attend to

go and buy something to make some food with instead of being more distracted on cleaning. I will just do the cleaning after that.

“We might be leaving tomorrow”, Mbheki mentions after getting off his phone and I look at him.

“Oh”, He stands up from the bench and comes towards me and stands behind me.

“Yeah, there is nothing much left for us here”, he says.

“I hear you”

“Soon we should start with restoring and extending this place”, he says.

I turn around and look at him.

“Meaning?”

“Meaning that we have to find a new design for the new house”, he says and smiles.

I smile along with him.

“We will see”

“Can I sleep next to you?”, He asks.

“No, I don't want to disrespect your uncle”

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I say.

“He will be okay with it”, I shake my head.

“No, we will sleep next to each other the filling night. One night wouldn't hurt us.”, I say.

He groans, clearly unhappy but he does get my point. We are not even married and as much as his uncle likes me we shouldn't really be disrespecting his home.

BUSISILE.

Morning came too soon, I was up already. Out in the yard and with the other children up too so as the wives. I left Mabutho in bed and went into the kitchen and made some food for everyone who was asleep, yes I was the first one to wake up and MaKhumalo joined me in a matter of just a few minutes when I had just finished cooking, the other wives followed with their other duties outside of the house.

She looks at me placing her hands on her hips.

“You want to kills us with poison now?”, She says and I am taken aback with what she has said.

“Cha ngi...”, she interrupts me.

“Cha Ini?(no what?)I know sly young girls like you. Sies,nx”, She clicks her tongue.

I ignore her and dish up for Mabutho and prepare to leave.

“That boy will wake up one day and you will leave this family skhohlakali ndini sengane(evil child) mark my words,nx”,She says and I just leave the kitchen.

The wall back to the room is a bit dreading, my heart is heavy and I will not lie and say words do not get to me when they actually do. I get in the room and Mabutho is still asleep. I close the door and I look at him for a moment before I shake him to wake up and he does,groaning and unhappy to be woken up this soon.

“Here is some food”,I say handing the food to him.

“Okay, why are you up so early?”,he asks

“I couldn't sleep anymore”,He sits up and leans against the headboard.

He takes his food and thanks me thereafter.

He starts eating.

“I will be back. I am just going to check on your mom”,I say.

He nods his head.

I move away from him and leave the room, I make my way to MaThabethe's room and I knock in hopes that she is awake so I can take her grandson. She has been helpful and I am very

thankful for that too and now I have go get back to my mommy duties as it is.

The door soon opens and it seems she has been awake too,she smiles when she sees me.

“Busisile, how are you?”

“I am good mah, sorry I didn't come yesterday”

“Its okay, I was the one who didn't want you to fetch my little boy.”,she says.

“Thank you so much”,I say.

She smiles and turns telling me she is coming back.

I wait and soon she comes back with my child. I am happy to see him and I take him immediately from her and also his things and thank her once more.

“You are welcome.”

“Thank you”,I make my way back to our room.

I feel like the stay here will be very long and if I don't take care of some issues then my stay here will never be good for me.

IMINATHI

I push his abdomen away from behind me making him slip out of me and let go of the leg that he was holding for my balance as the water splashed infront of me and I quickly get out of the

shower carefully going to the toilet and I vomit everything I had just had this morning in there.

My throat burns there after and my stomach feels empty.

Bongani gets me a glass of water and I thank him before I flush the toilet.

I have been sick this past week and I am afraid of even going to the doctor and finding out what is going on because I know what could be the possibility of being this sick but I am just scared.

It has been a minute since I have lived with a man, A minute where my life changed and I fell in love and accepted love too. I am not in a rush to actually have the white wedding but the traditional festivities I am okay with them and Bongani supports my idea and that is what I love about this man so much. He is just supportive.

“Baby I think you should go to the doctor. You have been sick like this, the whole week”, he says.

“I am scared”, I say and he picks up my wet self.

“Why are you scared?”, he asks.

How do I tell him that I think I might be pregnant? I need to go and ask that lady from the clinic why the contraceptive

injection didn't work if that is the case, really I need answers on that.

“I might be pregnant”, I say and look at him.

“Pregnant how, you said your injection can prevent that”, A smile creeps up on his face.

He can't hide it even if he has a little frown that he is trying to form on his face.

“I don't know. I need to ask the clinic lady if maybe I am or not and if I am we going to have problems with her”, Seriously though we will.

He touches my stomach.

“There is a little baby in there?”

“We haven't confirmed it yet Bongani”

“A woman knows their body so it might be that”, He gently rubs it.

I look at him, he loves this I can see.

“How will we take care of a child with our busy lives?”, I ask.

“We will figure that out. Come let's go and carry on showering then we will go to the doctor” he says.

I will not even fight him.

“Please finish what you started”, I say.

I still want that shower moment before we were interrupted by my vomit. He smiles as I said that and kissed my cheek.

“I would gladly do it baby”, I smile and we go back into the shower.

We have our moment and soon we shower and get out.

We go and get dressed and I rebrush my teeth and then I prepare myself. I hope it's just bile and I don't want to think of how it would be like to raise a child now. This man is happy and it's evident without us even reaching the doctor's office.

IMINATHI.

I am at the doctor. Bongani decided that it is okay to accompany me and I am okay with it honestly. I am sure that whatever I am going through, it's pregnancy and I cannot even think of anything else beside that. If I am pregnant then I will take it from there, we will see what we can do and how we will also work around my school schedule once the baby is here.

I am nervous, I will not lie and I don't know how I will even tell my grandmother if I am pregnant. My father would just feel like the world is crashing in front of him and Yonela? He will have a fit, that I know.

I still have school to complete and I haven't been properly married to this man but everything is forgotten the minute I am interrupted from my thoughts by Bongani telling me that we can now enter the doctor's room.

We stand up and make our way in, we are welcomed inside by the doctor and we get to be seated.

I state my case, tell him how I am feeling and that I would love to take a pregnancy test and he agrees with it.

I do what is necessary and when I am done I join my fiance and sit next to him. I know that Bongani will be happy if we are

pregnant. He couldn't even hid it from the assumption that I had laid out this morning.

The doctor gets the pregnancy stick from my urine and looks at it and utters “Congratulations”,I knew then that we will be parents and I look at this man next to me and he has a proper smile on his face.

“Thank you Sthandwa sami”,He says and I melt.

Forgetting that I am still a student and it will be stressful to be a parent, wife and student at the same time but people do that while working so I guess I will be able to handle things too.

We ask to see the baby and we get through with the scan. It comes to me that we will be parents. If someone told me all of this will be happening in my life this soon, I would've disagreed and actually laughed at them.

This Zulu man's sperms surpassed contraceptives. First time sleeping with a man and I get a child implanted in my stomach. Wow, that's bad luck.

Bongani is asking questions that he has in mind and I ? I don't have anything to say for now. Maybe when I have adjusted to this new change and this idea of being parents then I will be able to ask about the pregnancy and everything that comes with it.

The doctor soon removes the gel from my stomach and I get off the bed.

We are given pamphlets before we leave the doctor's room and it sinks in then.

We are going to be parents.

“I need to finish off with everything before the baby comes”, Bongani says.

“Like?”

“Like every traditional aspect we need to do has to be done and we get married so that the baby comes with us together officially”, I don't disagree with him.

“That's okay”, Yes, I wouldn't want my child being born out of wedlock too.

“I will inform my mom and dad”, He says.

I have to inform my father too.

“Can we announce the pregnancy when I start showing?”, I ask.

He looks at me and smiles. He kisses my cheek.

“That's okay baby”, I sigh and smile.

I love this man and tight now he is being very sweet.

DUDU

I have already cleaned up, packed what is needed to be packed and already called my sister and told her that I am leaving and hope that she would be able to visit me at the city. I am happy that she is happy in her marriage and that is all that I want for her.

I wheel my suitcase and Mbheki is standing by the car loading things inside and his uncle is still on call away from the car. We will wait for him to finish first before we leave this place.

“You look down”, Mbheki says.

“I wish we could stay longer but things are waiting for us back home”, I say.

“Don't worry, we will come back soon. When the house is done we will furniture it and have it nice and ready”, I smile and hug him.

“Thank you for everything”, I say and he hugs me back.

“I love you Dudu”, my heart skips a beat.

I hold onto him a bit longer “I love you too”, I utter those words towards him.

“I will never hurt you ever again, I promise with my life”, I choose to believe him.

We break the hug and he takes my things and loads them inside the car.

His uncle comes back from his call.

"We are ready to leave"

"Can we check on Busisile first before we leave?", He says.

He has been quiet since yesterday. Hardly heard him talk but I do understand that they have had a rough two days.

"I will call her", Mbheki says.

The uncle nods and he hops inside the car. I follow and Mbheki makes a call to Busisile and we wait for him to finish before he hops inside the car and informs us that it is okay to go and see Busisile before we leave.

I know how fragile she can be at times. Busi hardly associates herself in drama and she can't stand up for herself. when she wants to so I understand that she must have had it tough too yesterday.

She will tell me what went down when she is ready, so as this man whom I call my boyfriend.

The drive to the Ntuli household is not really a long one but the household just shows itself before you even know you have arrived.

I can see children from a distance running around the yard. Some grannies and then Mbheki takes out his phone and calls Busi.

We wait for her in the car and the uncle hops out of the car. We see bab'Ntuli approaching the gate.

They have a conversation with each other and soon I see Busisile by the gate. As soon as the gate opened her uncle engulfed her in a hug and they stood there for a moment. It is just a sight to see, makes one feel envious of the fatherly love that this man has for these children. One would think that they are father and daughter if he didn't know Busisile and himself on a personal level.

We watch as they break their hug and they seem to be talking. I turn to look at Mbheki and he looks at me and smiles.

“What are you thinking about?”

“They look so alike”, I say.

He nods his head.

“I know”, I mean he does look like them but Busisile is the female version of the uncle.

We wait for them for some time before Busisile makes her way towards the car and I open the door to my side and hop out.

“How are you?”

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She hugs me and I hug her back.

“I am good, how are you?”

“I am okay. I didn't see you yesterday”

“We see each other almost everyday”,She laughs.

“I will be back home in a few days. There are things that Mabutho and I need to sort out here first”,She says and I nod my head.

“Are they treating you well?”,She nods her head.

“Yes.”,I am glad to hear that.

BUSISILE

I wish that I was leaving as well but I can't at the moment. Mabutho told me that he wants us to go back home when the little fire has settled and being here for a moment is a bit awkward but bearable.

I watch as the car leaves, my uncle and brother with my best friend. I turn around and see Mphemba. I will not lie, I have been avoiding him for so long but I think it's time I gathered courage and actually talked to him on my own, apologize for what I had done and acknowledge my behaviour.

“Baba”,I say as I approach him.

I look down just to avoid his eyes.

“MaSibisi”

“I would like for us to talk”,I say and catch a glimpse of him and he nods his head.

I breathe in and out before I could even utter anything.

“I would love to apologize for what I did, with the pain and humiliation that I had put you through. The decision I took regarding Mabutho and I was a conscious decision. I will not justify my unruly and unkind behaviour. The anger you have towards me is justified and I do apologize for that. I wish I could've done things differently and in a proper manner as well. I am sorry”,I say.

He sighs after I said that.

“I forgive you Busisile. I understand you are young and that you would like younger people. I take your apology”,I slightly smile.

“Thank you so much Mphemba”,I say.

“Mabutho tells me that he wants to take you completely from my hands”,I look at him and nod my head slightly.

“Uhm, he did mention it in passing”,I say.

I didn't think that they actually talked.

“I would have to do a ceremony for the both of you and re-introduce you as Mabutho's wife then.”,He says.

“Uhm, thank you baba”,He nods his head.

“Let me go and find your mother”,He says before walking off.

I know he is going to MaThabethe. She has traumatized the man that he is very clingy on her.

I walk off as well going to the room that Mabutho and I use. I find him seated in the bed and he turns to me.

“How did it go?”

“Well, my uncle is happy and he is okay”,He nods his head.

“He told me something though”

“What did he say?”,He asks.

“He told me that we might actually be his children. I kind of believe that”

“You do look like him but the DNA test will confirm things”,he says and I nod my head.

“Yes, we will get it done but even if he is not my dad I still like him as one”,he nods his head.

“Where is the baby?”

“With umah”,I nod my head.

“Your father told me you guys spoke ”,I sit next to him.

“We did. I just want thing to be right and no mistakes happening”

“Thank you for loving me baby”,I say and kiss his lips.

“You will officially be mine soon”,He lays me down and gets on top of me and I giggle.

“No baby for 3 years”,I say.

“Awu mama, that can't happen”,I give him a look.

He kisses my cheek.

“We will see about that MaSibisi”,He kisses my neck and I giggle.

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TO BE CONTINUED...

BUSISILE

The days passed with us still at the Ntuli yards until yesterday when we decided that it is time to leave. After talking to Mphemba I felt better. I am grateful that he was able to forgive me for the wrong that I had done unto him and seeing my parents did give me that push and courage to actually fix things in my life that I had messed up. Now I just feel a bit better.

Mabutho is going to work tomorrow. The farm is coming together and it's so beautiful to watch how this man is passionate about his work. His father wants him back at the family farm but he declined and said he wanted his own thing and I quiet understand where he is coming from.

MaThabethe is here with us. She told her husband that we are in 'need' of her when she is the one who wanted to tag along.

Obviously the husband wasn't happy with the sudden trip his wife is taking but it is MaThabethe we are talking about. What she says is final at this point. She is helpful though, she doesn't mind sitting with the baby. She takes him first thing in the morning and I think if it was up to her, he would be sleeping next to her all night.

Here I am in the kitchen preparing something to eat. I am going to get my DNA test done and I am nervous. I don't know why

but something in me just feels scared of what the outcome will be in the next few days after the testing. I wish that we could get quick results because I don't think that I would be able to stick through the waiting. Mabutho is accompanying me to go to the doctor and meet up with my uncle and brother. He seems relaxed about the whole thing while I am here freaking out.

I think I wouldn't be happy when I find out the truth. It would feel like our whole lives have been a lie that my mother knew all along.

"Baby are you done?", I hear Mabutho and I quickly finish up before he comes into the kitchen.

He appears just as I get my sandwich.

"Baby we have to there in 30 minutes", He says and I sigh and grab a plastic wrap.

"I know", I wrap my food. I will just have it on the way.

"Are you okay?"

"I am nervous"

"Everything will be okay"

"I know ,it's just what if he is our dad and my mother has been lying all along or what if my brother and I don't share the same father?", I ask myself those questions too.

I am just scared of finding out the truth.

Mabutho steps closer to me and places the car keys on the counter before he wraps his arms around my waist.

“Whatever happens your brother will still be your brother.”,He says and I nod my head.

“Okay”

“Now, can I have a kiss?” ,I quickly nod and give him a quick kiss before his mother comes in here.

“We can go now”

“I need a proper kiss when we get outside” ,He says.

“I will give it to you. Don't worry” ,I say.

He lets me go and takes the car keys and I take my food and rush to go to MaThabethe and tell her that we are leaving. Having her around is such a blessing, I don't even feel the void of not having my mother around most times. She is my mom too, that I believe more than her being a sister wife in my eyes.

I say my good byes to her and leave her. I get outside and hop usndie the car before Mabutho starts driving the car and we leave. I take out my food and I start eating and he holds out his palm and I know he wants my food. I break some for him and he thanks me and eats.

“You should've told me to make some for you”

“I am not hungry”,Hawu.

“Hawu”,He shrugs his shoulders.

I carry on eating.

“How is Mandisa and the baby?”

“They are okay. I will see my daughter this weekend”,I nod my head.

“Okay”

“In the next coming weekend we have to go back home”,I look at him.

“Why?”

“Baba is doing a ceremony for us.”,I don't understand.

“For us for what?”,I ask.

“For our child and also us being introduced to the ancestors and you being erased as Dad's wife”,I swallow.

“He agreed?”

“Yes, he didn't have much of a choice.”

“Everyone has a choice Mabutho. He must've forgiven us now”,I say.

He nods his head.

“I hope that most of my siblings will make it”, I lean back on the seat.

“They will”, I smile at him.

I hope they come just to support their brother even if they do not like me that much.

I finish my food just when we are about to arrive at the doctor's surgery.

Mabutho quickly hops out of the car and comes to my side and opens the door for me. I thank him and he locks the doors before we make our way in and I see my brother with my uncle. I rush to them and they hug me. I am not used to hugging a fatherly figure and it feels nice. It feels like I am a little girl and I am safe in a father's arms.

We break the group hug.

“Ndodana, how are you?”, My uncle asks.

“I am well baba, I hope you are well as well”, He says.

“I am”, He says and smiles looking at me.

“The doctor is waiting for us”, I nod and Mabutho tells me he will wait for me outside while I go inside.

I am nervous but we are now here. We make our way inside the doctor's room.

IMINATHI

Vomiting, I wish I was pooping more than vomiting. I hate the bitter after taste that I have in my mouth and the amount of times I have to clean my mouth is just draining but you know what? This man is enjoying all bits of it. I wish he was the pregnant one so he could feel all that I am feeling right now.

I just got out of the bathroom for the 3rd time today and I am tired already. May this only last this week and then over to the father because we should go 50/50 on this pregnancy. I walk into the kitchen and find this man by the stove wearing my apron while trying to make something on the stove.

“What are you doing?”, I ask.

“I am making some noodles and eggs for you”, he says and I giggle then get closer to him and take over from the stove.

He takes off my apron.

“That is so sweet of you baby but the smell of eggs put me off”, I say.

“I will learn how to cook for you just to eat if I have to”

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He says and I giggle.

“How about we cook together and that way you can learn”,he nods his head.

“How are you feeling now?”,He asks me.

“I am a bit better but I hate this vomiting business”,I say.

“Maybe we can ask the doctor what can help you”,He says.

“It is considered normal baby so there is nothing that will help for now”,I say and he wraps his arms around me and kisses my cheek.

“I am sorry Sthandwa sami”,he says.

“I just hope this baby comes out looking like me after all of this”,He chuckles.

“Maybe, but I have strong genes”,That I can't deny. Look at Busisile's child. He doesn't even look like his mother.

“I hope I have something though”

“You will baby”,He says.

“Can you get some bread and honey please”,I say.

He nods and lets me go. I get to the fridge and take some bananas.

I get back to the counter and I switch off the stove before I take anything else that I may need then start with making my sandwich. He looks at me.

“Is that nice?”

“Yes it will be”, He nods his head with a frown as he looks at me.

I finish everything and give him a slice and he takes it. We both taste it. He frowns more.

“It's nice”

“The bread throws me off and the honey”, He says.

“I will eat it then”, He puts his half bitten sandwich down and looks at me.

“You want milk with that?”, it's a sarcastic question I can tell but I answer him.

“Yes, that would be wonderful.

BUSISILE

The wait will be what will make me feel nervous than before. The doctor took our samples and she mentioned that after 3 days we will get our results and now we have to wait. I am nervous but also a part of me is happy that have done this. Even without our mother knowing but my uncle deserves some type of justice.

“Your boyfriend tells me that you are getting married to him”,it's Mbheki.

I just nod my head.

“Yes”

“His family approves?”

“Yes they do, we have put our differences aside and I love Mabutho”,I say looking at him.

“Okay, I know”,I nod my head.

“Do you love my friend?”,I ask.

They have a thing going on that I have noticed. The way he behaves around her just gave it off”

“Yes, I do”,He says.

“Don’t hurt her”,I say and he smiles.

“I promise I will not”,I hope so.

I love Dudu like my sister so I will fight for any of them. I will not just take Mbheki's side just because we are blood related.

“What if we are half siblings?”

“There is nothing like that in our culture Busisile. We are still siblings and no white test will determine that we are or not”,he says.

"I am just scared", I say.

"You shouldn't be. You should focus on your family now and if that man ill-treats you then we will shoot him", I gasp.

"Mbheki don't say that", I say.

"I promise you that"

"Since when do you know how to use a gun?"

"I will know the day someone hurts you", He takes me in his arms.

"I love you Busi"

"I love you too bhuti", I say.

My uncle appears and he appears with Mabutho. I wonder where they were and what they were doing.

"Are you okay?", My uncle asks and I nod my head.

"Yebo baba", I say.

"Mabutho invites us to your ceremony next weekend", I look at Mabutho and smile.

"It would be lovely to have you there"

"We will be there", He says.

I...I feel content with how my life is going right now.

DUDU

They came back earlier than I had anticipated. I am stuck with doing assignments and having to study for my test. University is not easy and it is taking some time for me to adjust but with the group that I work with at times, they are really helpful with me adjusting to my work. Babu'Sibisi dropped off Mbheki and he said that he can't stay for long as he has to run an errand and that was it. I made something to eat for Mbheki as I was getting something for myself and now he has been sitting next to me for the time that I have been sticking my nose on my books.

I feel tired already, it has been over 3 hours and my brain feels like it is getting exhausted right now so I need a breather at that.

“Are you done now?”,He asks as soon as he sees me closing my books and he discards his phone.

“For now yes, I didn't ask how everything went”

“We will soon get the results and Busisile is scared”

“Are you not?”,I ask.

“No I am not. Busisile and I are always going to be siblings. Nothing will ever change”,I nod my head.

“Thats beautiful”

“Can I kiss you?”,I shy away from him and he holds my chin turning me to face him.

“Is that a no?”,He smiles.

“No”,I say.

He gives me a perk.

“How about we go to the mall and get some ice cream and just have some fresh air from here?”,I would like that.

I pack up my school supplies and then I move to the bedroom to put my things away. I hope things go well for them. I really pray they do.

I change from what I am wearing and wear something a bit more relaxing for outside before I go towards him as he is waiting for me.

“I love you Dudu, never forget that”,I blush.

“I love you too”.

IMINATHI

Bongani just talked to his father, he was calling him with regards of the further steps that should be taken in order for us to finally be married.

I am watching something on TV. I am tired and really not in the mood of studying right now and I just want to have a breather.

My baby daddy/ fiance comes back from the call outside and he settles next to me and I offer him some chips but he declines.

“Mabutho and Busisile are getting married”, Oh wow!

I sit up.

“That's wonderful. I am happy for them”, He smiles.

“I am too, next weekend we have to go home”, he says.

That would be my first time going to his family home stead like that.

“I hope I will survive how big your family is.

“You will, my mother loves you and everyone else will love you too”

“Busi is a sweetheart so I will take your word for it”

“We will do the rest of our traditional festivities a month later.”

“I do not mind, I should inform my family and then we would start planning”, I pop some chips in my mouth.

“Umuhle mama, do you know that?”, He says staring at me.

I blush.

“Enkosi”

“We will have beautiful babies”,I laugh.

“That scares me. It's like you will get me pregnant right after this one”,I say.

“If it happens then it happens”,He says.

Haibo, I can't have that. I need to study but I really need to make sure after this pregnancy that my womb is protected from his sperms.

“We will see about that”,He smiles.

I hope and pray that I don't get another baby anytime soon.

NARRATED.

Just as he is stuck on his errands. Business errands. Sibisi was left in thoughts, the DNA tests are just for formalities but he knows through his bones and blood that Mbheki and Busi are his children and Busisile resembles him the most.

He has been hurt, once, twice too many times. He had hunger for the better and soft life that his woman then didn't have the same hunger for but saw him as failure for trying to be ‘Modern’,It wasn't bad for him. He didn't see it as something bad but saw it as an opportunity to see better things in life , see the better side of life too.

Yes it wasn't easy for him to achieve what he has achieved and it wasn't easy for him to get where he was. It was difficult for a

farm boy like him to just make it but non the less he did through it all.

In all of this he is pained though. Pained that though he was wronged but he was always seen as the villan and he took it. He is pained that the possibility of him having children is high and he never really raised them.

He wished that he knew this back then. He would've taken them with him and raised them on his own.

He never found love, never tried to find a companion that he would grow old with juts to protect his shattered heart from further pain. He didn't want a woman who will come in his life and take him for granted and take his character for granted. Though women fell on his feet knowing his status in life and his financial state, not forgetting that he was eye catching but he never was interested in settling with any of the women who came in his life. Even those who qualified to be genuine in intentions and could be better.

BUSISILE

The days are slowly passing, slow as it is but they are slowly passing and the more closer the result time comes in the more I get nervous.

I have been sick lately, very sick at that. vomiting and weak, I cannot even down anything and I will promise you that I am not

pregnant. I haven't been intimate with Mabutho in 3 months. Though now we have a go ahead now to be intimate since I am well healed but it hasn't been something that has been priority and crossed our minds much.

My uncle has been coming here everyday just to check up on me these past 4 days and I have been assuring everyone that I am okay. Even the doctor didn't find anything wrong and ruled out that I might have bile and just need to cleanse my body inside. I should hydrate and have a healthy fix in terms of what I will eat.

So Mabutho has gotten me everything that spelt healthy in it. I will not lie, it's tasteless some of it and I don't really enjoy it but with some foods I do enjoy it.

I have to start packing too and preparing for the trip we will soon take and I can't wait honestly it is what has been keeping me excited.

I have got a dress too for the day. I mean who wouldn't be excited to marry the person they love?

I know that my uncle will come to visit just to check how I am. As much as I am sick but I know that I will be better.

I lay on the bed as I feel a bit tired and I hear a knock on the door. It's MaThabethe.

“How are you feeling? You are packing?”, I nod my head.

“Yes mah, I don't want us to have problems and forget things when it's time to leave for home”, She smiles.

“You are excited”, I nod my head.

“Yes I am”

“Have you eaten?”

“Yes, Mabutho made sure I ate before he left”

“Thsts good, I was going to feed you too”, We laugh.

“Your uncle is here with your brother”, She says.

“Okay, I am coming”, she turns and leaves.

I get off the bed and follow after her going down the stairs. This house is huge and I cannot wait one day to fill more kids in here with Mabutho.

I see them just as I get to the last step and I rush to them. As much as I see my uncle almost everyday now but I still get a bit excited to see him.

“You will fall sickly”, Mbheki says.

I give him a look.

“Hello baba”, I say ignoring him and my uncle smiles.

“How are you?”

“I am well I am feeling a bit better today”

“I am happy to hear that”,he says.

“Let me go and get something for you guys”

“Its okay, sit down we don't want you falling in the kitchen”,Mbheki says and I give him a look.

“We are actually here with the results”,I am shocked.

“I thought it will take a week or more”,I say.

“They came earlier than we have anticipated”,I swallow and sit down on the couch.

They join in.

“You have nothing to worry about”,Mbheki says and I nod my head.

“Okay”,My uncle hands over the envelope to me.

“I am scared. I will faint if I look”,I say.

“Okay, breathe in and out. It will be okay”, he says.

I nod my head.

“I thinm you should do it baba”,Mbheki says.

He nods his head and opens the envelope.

I find myself clinging on my brother. Scared to find out the reality of what could be happening after this. The news that could change what has been our lives. He takes out the papers

and we wait for him to say something. He reads everything and I see his hands shaking.

“What does it say baba?”, Mbheki asks before he takes the papers from him.

I am now scared.

“We are siblings Busi”

“Meaning?”, I ask.

“M...Malume is our father”, He says and I see him clench his jaw.

My uncle, unable to speak and so as I. Shock, I didn't think things will turn this way.

I get up from my couch and kneel in front of him.

“I am sorry”, I say.

I am sorry that my mother deprived us life with our real father. That we had to be perfect for us to be accepted by them. That he has hurt him so much in life.

“I am so sorry”, I say.

He pulls me up and hugs me.

“It's okay. It is not your fault”, He says and brushes my back.

Why did my mom do such to all of us?

“I love you guys”,He says.

I smile. I love him too, he has done more of a parent job than the parents I had.

“We love you too”,He laughs.

We break the hug and I hug Mbheki too. I am just relieved now that we know the truth and that we are also siblings. I am just happy,I even feel a bit better. I think the results were making me feel sick.

I got them something to eat, I didn't want them to leave without eating too. Mbheki helped me and MaThabethe was with Babu'Sibisi. She came to greet and they started talking about the weather. You know old people and weather talk.

“How are you feeling?”,I ask.

“I am angry at umah for doing this to us”,He says.

I nod my head. I get where he is coming from.

“She will never give us answers. You know that”,He sighs and nods his head.

“I know. How are you feeling?”,He asks.

“It will take time to come to terms with everything but I am happy. My man is treating me well and I have you here also”,He chuckles.

“He better treat you well”, We hear some laughing.

“Your mother in law must be really funny for him to laugh like that”

“She is”, I say. He gives me a look.

“What?”

“She might turn into your step mother if your father in law is not careful. She is beautiful though I wouldn't blame him”, I gasp.

“Dont think ill of the elders. It's just an innocent laugh”, I say.

He laughs at me. This one thinks he knows everything.

MATHABETHE.

With my grandson asleep I decided to go downstairs after giving Busisile with her family some privacy. I saw that what these men were here for was serious and she feels the need for me to know then she will let me know what is happening.

Mphemba has been calling me too much since I left. I don't like the fact that he doesn't maintain his polygamous marriage now that well. He is just all over me and I think being here gives me a breather and I love being around these kids. I would visit Bongani but he told me that he will call me when he wants me there with Philani too. They want to be on their own and be big kids and so Mabutho doesn't mind having me around him, so I

will give my attention to him and Busisile. I enjoy being with them, being in the city once in a while makes me remember how much of a city girl I once was before I got married.

I am happy for all my children. I am happy that they have found their partners and pray that they stick to them alone. Polygamy is not all roses, it's a difficult thing to get into and a difficult thing to get through but you do when you love someone for that long.

Busisile appears as her uncle is talking.

“Sorry to interrupt, baba what would you like to drink?” She asks and he smiles.

“Some tea would be fine”, he says.

“So as for you mah?”

“Yes, thank you. Don't you want me to help?”, I ask.

“If I faint then Mbheki will carry me”, she laughs and we join her.

She then disappears.

“She is such a wonderful child. I am glad that my son saw a wonderful person in her”, I say.

“She is, soft spoken but she is. Like you”, He says and I laugh.

“Good auras attract each other I guess”, I say.

“I guess I have a good aura too”, He says and I laugh. He joins in.

“Would it be bad to take my in law to lunch sometime?”

“It wouldn't be bad. Just lunch”, I say and he nods with a smile.

“Just lunch.”, I nod my head.

The kids return with the food and we thank them.

May God keep these kids for me, all of my children until I derail from this world.

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.....**The End**.....

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